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THE INHERITANCE.

I WRITE BUT OF FAMILIAR STUFFE,
BECAUSE MY STILE IS LOWE ;
I FEAR TO WADE IN WEIGHTIE WORKS,
OR PAST MY REACH TO ROWE.

GEORGE TURBERVILLE.

THE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF MARRIAGE.

Miss Fannie of Berkeley

Si la noblesse est vertu, elle se perd par tout ce qui n'est pas vertueux; et si elle n'est pas vertu, c'est peu de chose.

LA BRUYERE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

THE SECOND EDITION.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH:

AND T. CADELL, LONDON.

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THE INHERITANCE.

CHAPTER I.

Oh ! sooner shall the rose of May
Mistake her own sweet nightingale,
And to some meaner minstrel's lay
Open her bosom's glowing veil,
Than Love shall ever doubt a tone,
A breath of the beloved one !

LALLA ROOKIE.

MEANWHILE the lovers had much to say to each other ; but, for a time, the eloquence and the vehemence of Colonel Delmour bore down the softer accents of the Countess, as he pleaded his suit in all the energy of passion, and appealed to herself as a witness of the injurious treatment he met with from Mrs St Clair. But when he proceeded to urge an immediate union, as the only means of putting an end to the ma-

chinations against him, she stopped him by saying, "Do not renew that subject again for years to come, as you love me—I have promised my mother, that I will enter into no engagement till I am twenty-one, but I promise you then——"

"Then," interrupted Delmour, impetuously, —"that is a mere mockery. Gertrude, if you loved as I do, you would not talk so calmly of what *may* be years hence—every day seems to me an eternity, until you are mine beyond the power of fate to separate us. Years ! better tell me at once that I have nothing to hope ; despair itself would be almost a blessing compared to this intolerable agony of suspense."

"Ah ! Delmour, why should you be so unjust to yourself and me as to talk thus—I have no doubts of your faith and constancy, why should you have any of mine ?"

"Because no one can love as I do to distraction, without inquietude—passion without passion is an anomaly I cannot comprehend."

"And love without confidence in the person beloved seems to me still more inconceivable ; I have no more doubt of your fidelity than I have of my own."

“ But everything will be done to destroy your confidence in me—your mother is ambitious, Gertrude, she wants a more splendid alliance for you ; she thinks I am unworthy of you, and perhaps she is right.”

“ But, in that, I must judge for myself, and she knows my choice is made,” said the Countess with a blush.

“ But not confirmed—Ah ! Gertrude, would to God you loved as I do !—that you could conceive the miseries of separation—the worse than death it will be to me to part from you.”

“ But we shall see each other frequently, you must give up the army—you must not go abroad again—indeed, you must not—and then two years will soon pass away.”

“ And in that time, what may not be effected by the misrepresentations of your mother, and the artful insinuations of that cold-blooded stoic, Lyndsay ?”

“ You wrong your cousin, indeed, you do, by such a supposition—he is far above anything of the kind.”

“ Has he never once said anything that had a tendency to injure me in your estimation ?” de-

manded Colonel Delmour, turning his eyes full upon her.

“ If he had, he has certainly been very unsuccessful,” said the Countess, with a smile ; “ but, indeed, Edward is incapable of meanly insinuating——”

“ What, he spoke out, then !” exclaimed Delmour, passionately ; “ he told you of the follies, and the extravagances of my boyish-days, in which, however, he himself went hand in hand—and exaggerated them into vices—and warned you to beware of the profligate, who had lost, I forget how many hundred pounds one night at cards.”

“ No, indeed, he told me nothing of all this—you wrong him—you misunderstand each other ; but you must be better friends, now that he is my guardian.”

“ Your guardian !” exclaimed Delmour, as if thunder-struck ; “ what, in the name of Heaven, do you mean ?”

“ Even that it seems it was necessary for me to have guardians appointed, and so I have made choice of my cousin for one ; he has already proved himself my friend on more occasions than

one, and to him, I think, I owe my life ; you cannot, therefore, wonder at my choice."

" Yet you must be aware that Lyndsay is no friend to me, nor—I confess it—am I to him : we think differently upon most subjects, and his creed is much too bigotted and intolerant for me."

" Indeed, I have not found him so ; on the contrary, I should say he was extremely liberal in his sentiments, and lenient in his judgments ; and, I am sure, he has a great deal more toleration than I have. I wish I saw you both better friends—why should it not be so ?"

" Because I am no hypocrite, Gertrude ; and, perhaps, also, because—shall I confess my weakness to you ?—I am jealous that you should bestow so much of your regard upon him."

" Jealous of my regard for Edward Lyndsay !" exclaimed the Countess ; " then you would be jealous if I had a brother whom I loved."

" Yes, I believe I should ; when a man loves, as I do, to adoration, he can seldom brook any interference in those affections, which ought to be exclusively his own ; your lukewarm sort of people, I know, make all welcome ; but I am not one of those. Ah ! Gertrude, woman's heart is, in-

deed, a royal palace, if it admit but one guest, and then, 'tis a glorious privilege to be that one."

"Nay, you would rather turn it into a cell, I think," said Gertrude, smiling, "and become yourself a moping monk."

"No matter what it is, provided it is mine—solely and exclusively mine," returned Delmour, impatiently.

"But being yours, wholly yours," said the Countess, and she blushed at the tone of emphatic tenderness with which she said it; "surely you would not wish it to be unjust and ungrateful to all the world beside—such a thing would be no better worth having than this pebble on which I tread," as she touched one with her foot.

"Do not blame me, Gertrude, because conscious that I possess a pearl richer than all its tribe, I fear to leave it open to all, lest even a part of it should be stolen from me—Common things may be shared—but, who could lose the hundredth part of a rare and costly gem, without feeling that its value was gone? Even such a miser am I with your affections. You are all the universe to me; day and night I think, I dream but of you—a desert island in the midst of the ocean

with you would be a paradise.—Gertrude, if you shared in these feelings, how little would you think or care for others in comparison.”

“ Alas ! you little know—but how shall I convince you, sceptic as you are, of my—folly ?” added she with a smile ; “ you would not have me perjured, and to my mother—or drive from my house a friend and relation, to whom I owe so much—or retract my word passed to him, when I chose him for my guardian ?”

Colonel Delmour remained silent.

“ Surely you would not have me so base as to do any of those things, nor would you value such proofs of my attachment.”

Colonel Delmour found he had gone far enough for the present, and that, gentle and feminine as Gertrude was, his influence over her mind must be more gradual than he had expected. He saw that he was beloved with all the fervour and simplicity of a young confiding heart—but love with her was yet too pure and unsullied a passion to have tainted the better feelings of her nature. These still flowed free and generous—she loved and was beloved, and her heart expanded beneath the joyous influence, and the bright rainbow hues

of hope and fancy tinged every object with their own celestial colours. But no shade of suspicion or mistrust fell on the noontide of her happiness. Even the narrow, selfish, domineering sentiments she had just heard fall from the lips of her lover, seemed to her to breathe only the quintessence of love, and she looked on him in all the calm radiance of a happy trusting heart.

“Be it as you will, Gertrude,” said he, “my fate is in your hands—you know your power, for I have told you what I am—proud, jealous, vindictive, perhaps, where you are concerned; but such as I am you have vowed to be mine—have you not?”

“When I am twenty-one, that is, unless you should change your mind,” added she sportively.

“I change!” repeated he; “no, Gertrude, you will see many a strange sight before that comes to pass—this river may change its course, and these rocks may change into plains, but my heart can never change in its love for you.”

Much more of the same sort passed, for lovers, it is well known, carry the art of tautology to its utmost perfection, and even the most impatient of them can both bear to hear and repeat the same

things times without number, till the sound becomes the echo to the sense or the nonsense previously uttered. But lovers' walks and lovers' vows must have an end, and Lady Rossville and Colonel Delmour found themselves at the Castle, ere they had uttered one hundredth part of all they had to say.

CHAPTER II.

Hot from the field, indulge not yet your limbs
In wish'd repose ; nor court the fanning gale,
Nor taste the spring. Oh ! by the sacred tears
Of widows, mothers, sisters, aunts, forbear !

ARMSTRONG.

“ WHAT have you done with the Major ?” exclaimed his lady as they entered the saloon, and found her and Miss Pratt with their heads together.

Gertrude was at a loss how to answer this question, as, till this moment, she had as completely forgot the Major, as though no such person were in existence.

“ Where in the world is the Major ?” was repeated in a voice of alarm.

“ Very snug in his cloak probably,” answered Colonel Delmour, with a disdainful smile.

“ Lady Rossville—cousin, I entreat of you, what has become of the Major ?”

“ I daresay he is not far off,” answered the Countess ; “ but he did not overtake us.”

“ Good gracious !” exclaimed the lady, all panting with alarm, “ did he not overtake you ? then the Major is lost !”

“ My dear Mrs Waddell, don’t distress yourself,” began Miss Pratt ;—“ depend upon it he’ll cast up ; there’s good day-light yet, and he may meet some of the work people in the woods ; and we’ll send out some of the servants to seek for him. Colonel Delmour, will you pull the bell ; he never would think of taking the Crow-Foot Crag, and that’s the only ugly turn about the banks—Lady Rossville, I’ll thank you for the smelling-bottle there—there’s not much water in the river just now—Jackson, a glass of water here as quick’s you can, and send out some of the men to look for Major Waddell——”

“ With bells, ropes, and lanthorns,” said Colonel Delmour.

“ There is Major Waddell, Ma’am,” said the pompous Jackson, as he glanced his eye, but without turning his head, towards the window.

“ Where ?—Oh ! where ?” exclaimed his lady

as she flew to the window—"Thank God!" as she again sunk upon her seat.

The Major it certainly was *in propria persona*, slowly and laboriously plodding his weary way, close buttoned to the chin, though evidently ready to drop with heat and fatigue. He carried a handkerchief in his hand, which he ever and anon applied to his face, which shone forth like a piece of polished yew. To add to his perturbation, Miss Pratt, throwing open a window, screeched out to him—

"Come away, Major, make haste ;—here's your good lady in hysterics almost about you."

The poor Major, uttering an ejaculation of despair, did his utmost to mend his pace, and again the drooping capes, arms, sails, and tails of his cloak were all in commotion, as the inward man struggled and plunged amidst the toils of broadcloth and timmen, till at length the whole mass came floundering into the room.

"O, Major!" exclaimed his lady faintly, as she rose to meet him.

"My sweet girl, what is all this?" cried the Major, as he cast back part of his folds, and extended his arms like claws towards her.

“ I have been so frightened about you, Major. You must have met with something ; you are so heated, and—do tell me what has happened ; I see you have met with something.”

“ My dearest girl, I do assure you I have met with nothing. I have been rather on a wild-goose chase to be sure, trying to overtake my charge, the Countess there ; but,” turning to Colonel Delmour and her, “ I could not make you hear me at all, though I had you in sight almost all the way.” At this remark there was a smile on Colonel Delmour’s lip, and a slight blush on Lady Rossville’s cheek, which Miss Pratt did not like, and a sort of vague tremor ran through her frame.

“ That was very odd,” said Mrs Major recovering—“ I never doubted you were all together.—I shall take care another time how I trust you to walk without me.—O ! you have got yourself heated to such a degree, I am sure you will catch your death of cold.—Pray, Miss Pratt, shut down that window ;—now, Major, do sit away from the door, and, I beseech you, don’t think of taking off your cloak till you are cooler.”

“ My dear Bell,” gasped the almost suffocating Major.

“ Now, Major, I entreat of you——”

“ But—’pon my soul, this is a thousand degrees hotter than ever I felt it in Bengal.”

“ Well—but, Major, you know very well how ill you were in consequence of throwing off your cloak suddenly one sunny day, when you had got yourself over-heated, and you promised me, that you never would do so again.”

“ But, my dear Bell, this is absolutely like a day in June.”

“ Now, Major, I can only say——”

But happily for all concerned, the lady’s sayings were here stopped by the sound of the dressing-bell, and half-distracted between her desire to superintend the cooling of the Major, by keeping him in a hot room enveloped in his cloak, and her anxiety to dedicate the full three-quarters of an hour to the duties of her toilette, and the display of her Oriental finery, she felt much at a loss which to choose—at length, the woman prevailed over the wife, and the Major was allowed to betake himself to his dressing-room, while the lady repaired to hers.

CHAPTER III.

Ah ! sure as Hindu legends tell,
When Music's tones the bosom swell,
The scenes of former life return,
Ere sunk beneath the morning star,
We left our parent climes afar,
Immured in mortal forms to mourn.

Or if, as ancient sages ween,
Departed spirits half unseen,
Can mingle with the mortal throng,
'Tis when from heart to heart we roll
The deep-toned music of the soul
That warbles in our Scottish song.

LEYDEN.

AT dinner, Mrs Major reappeared in a dress which might have done honour to Cinderella's godmother ; but which, even with the aid of Hyder Ally's carbuncle, had no effect in subduing uncle Adam's flinty heart towards her. He, however, received her salutations with tolerable composure ; and, moreover, permitted her to touch his hands, but as for shaking them, that

required an effort little short of tearing the limpet from its native rock. As for the Major, he was too much exhausted by the toils of the day to be able even to offend, being reduced to a state of perfect passiveness.

“What a pretty woman your niece, Mrs Waddell, is,” whispered Miss Pratt, as uncle Adam and she stotted along, as usual, to dinner.

“Pretty!—what makes her pretty?—wi’ a face like a sooket carvy!”

“Ah, to be sure, she’s not like Lady Ross-ville; but where will you see the like of her? such a distinguished-looking creature as she is; for you see, although she has but that bit myrtle in her hair, that she brought in in her hand from the green-house before dinner, how much better her head looks than Mrs Waddell’s, with that fine pearl-sprig, that must have cost her many a gold rupee;—as Anthony Whyte would say, she’s really very classical.”

“I wish you wud nae compare them,” interrupted Mr Ramsay impatiently; as his temper was still farther irritated at seeing the haughty, but graceful, air with which Colonel Delmour

led the Countess to the top of the table, and, as a matter of course, placed himself by her.

“ ‘There’s a bold stroke for a wife playing there; but it won’t do,” again responded Miss Pratt, with a slight palpitation at the heart; which she would have scorned, however, to have admitted, even to herself.

Dinners are commonly dull things, unless when there is some *bel esprit* to take the lead, and act as *sauce piquante* to the company; but here was nobody (except Miss Pratt) who could, or would, lay themselves out to talk; and even she was somewhat damped, as the thoughts of her five guineas came across her, now and then, with a qualm. As if to counteract that, her chief business was in calling forth, and then construing, Lady Rossville’s most common civilities towards Mr Lyndsay, to the great annoyance of both, and the repressed indignation of Colonel Delmour.

Mrs Waddell thought neither the Major nor she met with that attention that was their due. She, therefore, sat very stately with Hyder Ally’s carbuncle, emitting dark and lurid gleams, as if it shared in her displeasure. In the evening it

was somewhat better, though, in any way, it was difficult to get such incongruous materials, as the company was composed of, to hang together; but, then, they were more at liberty to follow their own devices, and if music has not always charms to soothe a savage breast, it has, at least, the merit of keeping civilized beings sometimes in order. Although Lady Rossville had little expectation of deriving any pleasure from an exhibition of Mrs Waddell's musical powers, yet she was too polite to pass her over.

"Pray, sing me a Scotch song," said she, seeing her preparing to *execute* an Italian one; "I have taken quite a fancy for Scotch songs."

"Scotch songs!" repeated Mrs Waddell, with astonishment and contempt; "I hope, cousin, you don't think me *quite* so vulgar as to sing Scotch songs. I assure you, they are quite exploded from the drawing-room now: they are called kitchen songs," with an affected giggle.

"Call them what they will," said Lady Rossville, "I shall certainly learn to sing the songs of my own country, and to sing them, too, in my own way, *con amore*."

“ If so, you will sing them better than any mere taught singer will do,” said Mr Lyndsay.

“ But, I assure you, cousin, nobody sings them now,” said Mrs Major vehemently.

“ The more shame, then, to every body,” said Gertrude.

“ To every body who can sing them,” said Lyndsay ; “ but I believe it is much more difficult to sing one’s national music well in their native land, than it is to ‘ discourse most eloquent music’ in a foreign tongue ; the first speaks to every one’s heart and feelings, the other merely addresses itself to the ear or the taste, or, it may be, the ignorance of the audience. To sing Scotch songs well requires great compass of voice, a clear articulation, much taste, and the very soul of feeling.”

“ Pray, Mr Lyndsay, were you ever abroad ?” demanded Mrs Waddell, abruptly.

“ I spent two years on the Continent ; one of them in Rome.”

“ Indeed !” in a manner as if she doubted the fact, and rather displeased to think that any body should have been where the Major had not been.

“ Well, I must say, I am rather surprised at any

body who has ever been abroad being able to tolerate Scotch music. I think you say, Major, you have had little relish for it since you were in India."

"Oh! surely," said the Major, who just knew a drum from a fife.

"I like every thing that is good of its kind," said Lyndsay.

"Some of the Scotch airs are rather pretty," said Colonel Delmour, who, but for his abhorrence of Mrs Waddell, would have uttered an anathema against them.

"And I hope you admire the words?" said Mrs Waddell with an ironical air.

"Indeed I do many of them," said Lady Rosville. "Here, for instance, is such a pretty sentiment prettily expressed," and, as she leant against her harp, she touched its chords, and sung with taste and feeling,—

"Wilt thou be my dearie,
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
O, wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
And that's the love I bear thee."

"Well, I suppose it's my want of taste, for I

can't say I can discover any thing very beautiful there," said Mrs Major with a disdainful toss. "My dearie! what a vulgar expression! how should I look, Major, if you were to call me your dearie?"

"Ha! ha!—very good; but that is a charming thing you sing, my dear, '*Rosina mia caro*,'" said the Major, who was half asleep.

"Some of the Scotch songs are undoubtedly coarse, vulgar, and silly," said Lyndsay; "and most of them sung from beginning to end would certainly be somewhat of a penance; but many of them are charming, and a verse here and a verse there, in almost all of them, will be found to possess infinite beauty and——"

"I thought people who were really musical cared little for the words of a song," interrupted Mrs Major triumphantly.

"Milton thought otherwise, and few will dispute his ear for music; but if words are not fit to be heard, they ought not to be sung. It by no means follows, that because words are Scotch, they must needs be vulgar; on the contrary, I have heard good musicians say, that, from the frequent termination of the Scotch words in vowels, there

is a softness in the language, which renders it much better adapted to music than any other, the Italian excepted, and then, what a superiority in the poetry of our songs ! How little nature, feeling, or variety, is there in the greater part of the Italian ariettas and Venetian canzonettes."

" Did you ever hear '*Dee tentee pellpeetee* ?' " asked Mrs Waddell, with a consequential air.

Mr Lyndsay could scarcely restrain a smile at the question, "*Di tanti palpiti*" being scarcely less hackneyed than " The Flower of Dumblane," or " From the white blossom'd sloe," &c.

But, without waiting an answer, the lady forthwith squared her elbows, rounded her arms, spread out her fingers, and commenced, waving her head, and rolling her eyes from side to side, in the manner usually practised by vulgar affected singers, who try to make up by their bodily gestures for the want of all taste, feeling, and expression.

Colonel Delmour had been talking to Lady Rossville, in a low voice, during the greater part of this colloquy, which otherwise he never would have suffered to proceed, as he seemed to look upon the Major and his lady as quite beneath his

notice ; and although he might have deigned to contradict, he never would have stooped to reason with either of them. When she began, he certainly would have left the room, had not Gertrude's presence restrained him ; not that her singing was more obnoxious to him than it was to Lyndsay ; but the one was accustomed to consult only his own pleasure ; the other to consider the feelings of others.

“ What a store of pretty old Scotch songs your sister Anne has,” said Lady Rossville, trying to gloss over the deficiencies of the one sister in the praises of the other.

“ My sister Anne has a great store of nonsense in her head,” said Mrs Waddell, with a toss of her own ; “ it is so stuffed with religion and poetry, I think, and with texts, and songs, and hymns, that there seems little room for good common sense.”

“ From your account, she must greatly resemble a little quaint, simple sketch I have met with somewhere, and admired,” said Lyndsay ; “ I think it is one of old Izaak Walton's. Speaking, I presume, of some such person, he says, ‘ To say truth, she is never alone, for she is still ac-

complicated with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones.’”

“That seems to suit my cousin Anne exactly,” said Lady Rossville; “she is very sweet and very pleasing, and, I am sure, very good. I wished her to have come here with my aunts; but she writes me, she cannot be spared at present, and they will not be persuaded to leave home it seems—so we must do the best we can without them.”

Colonel Delmour placed some music before her, and they sung Italian and French duetts for the rest of the evening. Miss Pratt and Mr Ramsay battled away as usual at backgammon; but she was victorious, and again his suspicions of her recurred, and he thought—

“I wish she may be the thing after all; she kens owre weel how to shake the dice.”

CHAPTER IV.

Unless one could cure men of being fools, it is to no purpose to cure them of any folly, as it is only making room for some other.

HORACE WALPOLE.

MRS WADDELL did not find herself at all at home at Rossville; except Lady Betty and Miss Pratt, nobody seemed to notice her finery. The simplicity of Lady Rossville's dress was felt to be impertinent towards her, a married woman, and the Major could not stand beside Colonel Delmour's lordly port and fashionable *nonchalance*.

Then, except at meals, there seemed no possibility of getting hold of uncle Adam, and there was no speaking to him before so many people; it was only exposing him, poor man, to observation, and the less he was called out the better. It was inconceivable, too, what he made of himself all day, there was no getting a private word of

him, and, in short, the result was a determination to depart the following day. Fortune, however, seemed to favour her design on uncle Adam, as she found herself in the breakfast room with only him and the Major; none of the others of the party having yet appeared. She, therefore, accosted him in her most ingratiating manner, which was met, as usual, by a very cool response.

“ It is very difficult to get a word of you, uncle, except in the midst of these fine people. You seem always engaged—you are certainly composing something.”

“ Maybe I’m makin’ my will,” was the reply, in a manner most suspiciously calm and benign.

“ Indeed ! but I’m sure, uncle, you have no occasion to think of that just now. The Major and I were both remarking how uncommonly well you are looking—you were just saying to me yesterday, Major, that you really thought my uncle looked twenty years younger than he did last time you saw him.”

“ Yes, indeed, ’pon my word I think so.”

“ It’s a sign that change of air agrees with you, uncle, so I hope you’ll take a seat with the Major and me in our carriage, and accompany us to

Thornbank. I assure you, I shall be quite affronted if you don't; after staying here so long, it will have a very odd appearance in the eyes of the world, if you pass the Major and me over, and me a married woman—and, besides, you know, uncle, if you really wish to do anything about your property, though, I'm sure, there can be no hurry about that, you know you are much nearer the law people at Thornbank than here; and, indeed, Mr Aikinhead the advocate has promised us a visit this vacation, and, perhaps, you might like to advise with him before——”

“ I thank you, but I need naeboddy's advice as to the disposal o' my ain property,” replied uncle Adam, still preserving a sort of horrid supernatural mildness; “ my mind's made up.”

“ Indeed! well I really think I should be at a loss how to dispose of such a charming property as Bloom-Park.”

“ But I'm at nane—I'm just gaun to mak' a mortification * o't.”

“ A mortification of Bloom-Park!” repeated Mrs Waddell, in tones well suited to the words.

* In Scotland an endowment is termed a Mortification.

“ A mortification, my dear Sir !” ejaculated the Major.

“ Yes, just a mortification—what is there wonderful in that ?”

“ Why, I must say, I think, uncle, considering ——” gasped Mrs Waddell, vainly trying to preserve her unruffled dignity—“ how much is done for the lower classes, now, I really think the higher ranks stand quite as much in need of mortifications.”

“ I think sae too, so it’s lucky we’re baith agreed.”

“ I can assure you, uncle, although it’s a thing I would not choose to say to every body, the Major finds he has quite enough to do with his money.”

“ I dinna doot it.”

“ There is so much required now to support one’s rank in the world, that, I assure you, it is no joke.”

“ Joke—wha said it was a joke ?”

“ In short, uncle, I can assure you, in spite of the appearance we make in the eyes of the world, the Major and I both find ourselves pinched enough, and he now doubts very much about

buying a place ; although certainly Thornbank does not suit us in many respects—the house is very indifferent—we have only one drawing-room, and, with his connections, that is not the thing—and the garden is really a poor affair ; so that, altogether, I am really anxious the Major should find another residence.”

“ He’ll maybe find ane at Bloom-Park before it’s lang,” said uncle Adam drily.

“ O ! uncle, I’m sure we never thought of that, and I thought you said you were going to make a mortification of it ?”

“ So I am—but it’s to be a mortification as you say for the rich ;—it’s to be a mortification for thae miserable, unfortunate men, that are married to taupies and haverels that spend a’ their substance for them.”

Uncle Adam had here broke out into his natural manner, and there is no saying how much plainer he might have spoken, had he not, at that moment, been checked in his career by the entrance of Mr Lyndsay, who was the only person (strange as it may appear) for whom he felt any thing approaching to respect ; but there was so much mildness and calmness of manner, with so

much manly dignity in his deportment, that even uncle Adam was ashamed to behave ill before him. The rest of the party came dropping in, and Mrs Waddell, with one cheek very red, was obliged to take her seat in silence ; it gradually cooled, however, as she began to think it was just her uncle's way ; he liked a rough joke, and so on ; while the Major, for some little time, sat revolving whether he should not call upon the old man to say what he meant—if there was any thing personal in his allusion, he——but the poor Major, even to himself, could not say what he would do—at last, he too gulped down the affront with his last dish of tea, and, by the time breakfast was over, both were ready to enter the lists again with uncle Adam.

Upon hearing of the proposed departure of the Major and lady, Gertrude said all that was necessary on the occasion ; but she was too sincere to be pressing in her entreaties for them to prolong their stay ; she felt that her relations were ridiculous, and she saw they were despised by Colonel Delmour. It was rather a relief, therefore, to hear they were going away. Any deficiencies on her part were, however, amply atoned

for by Miss Pratt, who was vehement in her remonstrances, assuring them they had seen nothing of Rossville yet, that it was really no visit at all ; people scarcely knew one another's faces till they had spent at least three days together, &c.

In spite of all that could be urged by Miss Pratt, however, the Major and lady remained fixed in their purpose to return home ; all they would concede was to remain part of the morning, and the carriage and Cæsar were ordered to be in readiness accordingly.

The breakfast party, with the exception of Lyndsay, having lounged over their repast to the utmost length of procrastination, read their letters and newspapers, pampered their dogs, and in short, done all that idle people do to kill time, even at his very outset, *en masse*, were severally sauntering away to try their skill individually, each their own way, when, as uncle Adam was retreating, Mrs Waddell followed him into the anti-room, and was as usual followed by the Major.

“ Before we go, uncle, I wish to know if there

is any thing I can do for you ; since you don't seem inclined to accompany us at present—Any message to Bloom-Park ?—We shall pass close by it, you know ; and, by-the-bye, uncle, I really wish you would give us an order of admittance there—it has a most extraordinary appearance in the eyes of the world that the Major has never yet been within your gate.”

“ O ! my dear Bell, you know, if your uncle has any objections to showing his grounds——”

“ Weel, weel, dinna plague me, since it's to be a mortification at ony rate ; gi'e me pen and ink, and ye shall ha'e an order, if that's a' ye want,” said Mr Ramsay impatiently.

Pen, ink, and paper, were speedily procured, and uncle Adam, seating himself in a most deliberate manner, produced the order.

Mrs Major glanced her eye upon it, then reddened as she exclaimed—

“ Such a way of wording it !—Good gracious ! uncle, can you suppose I will go on these terms ? ‘ Admit Major Waddell and his wife !’—Wife ! I really never met with any thing like that !”

“ What is't you mean ?” demanded uncle

Adam in a voice of thunder—"Are you no Major Waddell's wife?"

"Why, my good Sir," began the Major, "you know it is not customary to call ladies of a certain rank *wives* now."

"Certainly not," interposed his lady; "I thought every body had known that!—Wife!—what else could you have said if the Major had been a carter?"

"What *are* you then, if you're no his wife?"

"Why, my lady, you know, my dear Sir, would have been the more proper and delicate thing."

"Your leddy!" cried uncle Adam, with a sardonic laugh, "your leddy!"

"Certainly," said the lady, with much dignity; "there can be no doubt about that; and I can assure you, I have too much respect for Major Waddell and myself, to submit to any such low vulgar appellation."

"I've met wi' mony a daft thing in my day," said uncle Adam, "but this beats them a'; a married woman that'll no submit to be called a wife! I dinna ken what's to come next. Will you be his dearie then?"

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“ Undoubtedly, my dear ; beggar-wife, in fact, means neither more nor less than the wife of a beggar-man ; and, in these times, when there is such a tendency to a bad spirit amongst the people, and such an evident wish to bring down the higher ranks to a level with themselves, it becomes the duty of every gentleman to guard his privileges with a jealous eye.”

“ I for one certainly never will give in to these liberty and equality notions, *that* I am determined.”

“ I hope not, indeed,” said the Major, warmed into fervour by the spirit of his lady, “ I hope not, indeed.”

“ How,” said the lady, “ can my servants possibly look up to me with proper respect, when I am brought upon a level with themselves ?”

“ You are perfectly right, my dear, they *cannot* do it, it is impossible.”

“ Perfectly—wife, indeed !”

CHAPTER V.

Leath we are to diseas or hurt your persone ony wayis, and far leather to want you.

BANNATYNE'S *Journal*.

THE dialogue was now at its lowest ebb, when Miss Pratt came pattering into the room full speed.

While this disturbance was going on in one room, Mrs St Clair was conversing with Mr Lyndsay in another on the subject of her daughter's pupillage, and Lady Rossville and Colonel Delmour found themselves together in the drawing-room, where they flattered themselves with enjoying an uninterrupted *tête-à-tête*. But within the drawing-room was a small turret, containing piles of music, *porte-feuilles* of drawings and engravings, heaps of worsteds and sewing-silks, and, in short, a variety of miscellaneous articles, which the Countess had not yet had leisure to

look over. This was a favourite haunt of Miss Pratt's, who was fond of picking and grubbing amongst other people's goods ; not that she actually stole, but that, as she expressed it, she often met with bits of things that were of no use to any body, and that when she showed to Lady Rosville, she always made her welcome to. For some time her head had been completely immersed in a large Indian chest, containing many odds and ends, a few of which she had selected for the purpose of being hinted for, and she was just shaking her ears from the cobwebs they might have contracted in their researches, when they were suddenly smote with the sound of her own name, pronounced by Colonel Delmour ; she heard the Countess's voice in reply, but it was too soft and low to enable her to ascertain her words.

“ Since Miss Pratt is disagreeable to you and odious to me, why don't you dismiss her the house, then ?” asked Colonel Delmour—“ Much as you despise her, she may do mischief—Ah, Gertrude !” —But here Colonel Delmour's voice sunk into a tenderer strain, and its undistinguishable accents only penetrated the massive door which was betwixt them. Miss Pratt had met with many a

buffet in her day, but she never had met with anything like this, and her ears tingled with rage and mortification at hearing herself talked of in such a manner.

“ I wish Anthony Whyte heard him ! ” was her first mental ejaculation, though even to herself, had she considered a moment, the mortifying conviction must have been, that, if Anthony Whyte did hear it, it would only be to laugh at it. She tried to make out something more, which might prove either a confirmation or a refutation of this opprobrious expression; but “ love—doubts—adore—agony—suspense—unalterable heart—wholly mine,” &c. were all she could pick up; but these were too much—the sword that had just fallen upon her cut two ways, if not three; her respectability (and that was her weak side) was compromised; her footing in a house she had long looked upon as a home was endangered, and her five guineas were in the most imminent peril. In short, she found she was in a very great scrape, and the best thing she could do at present would be to take the first word of flyting and depart.

“ Dismiss, indeed ! dismiss one’s own blood ! ”

and Miss Pratt's danced and bubbled at the bare thought of such a thing. There was a little back stair from the turret, by which she could emerge without going through the drawing-room, and confronting her adversaries, and to that she betook herself, and after a little searching, found the Major and his lady just beginning to recover their equilibrium. When one's mind is ruffled, it is always a satisfaction to meet with others in the same state, especially when the cause is somewhat similar, and though neither party would for the world have betrayed to the other the cause of its discomposure, yet both felt that sort of secret sympathy which made it hail fellow, well met !

Miss Pratt was too experienced in the art of offering visits, securing a seat in a friend's carriage, and such like manœuvres, to be at any loss on the present occasion ; and as the Major and lady, in spite of all their finery, were not particularly sought after, they were much flattered at the compliment, and soon settled that she should accompany them, in the first instance, to Thornbank, where she insinuated she would not be allowed to remain long, as both Lady Wellwood

and Lady Restall would go mad, if they heard she was in their neighbourhood, till they got hold of her.

This important point settled, the next thing to be done was to give all possible bustle and importance to her departure, that she might not appear to have been driven away by any thing that insolent puppy had said ;—she had no notion of sneaking away, as if her nose had been bleeding, or showing herself any way flustered, or giving him the slightest satisfaction in any way. She, therefore, went openly to work—rung all the bells—called to the servants—spoke loudly, but calmly, about her preparations to Lady Betty and Mrs St Clair ; and finally repaired to the room, where she had left the Countess and her lover, and where she still found them.

“ Well, Lady Rossville, I’m just come to apologize to you for doing what is really an ill-bred thing ; but your good friends, the Major and his lady, have prevailed upon me to take a seat in their carriage ; and, as there’s many visits I ought to have paid long ago, our cousins the Millbanks for one, I’m just going to run away from you. I

declare there's the carriage; and, by-the-bye, Countess, there's a bit of Indian silk I have of yours that I got for a pattern, and have always forgot to return—but I shall bring it with me next time I come," with a look of cool defiance at Colonel Delmour.

"You are perfectly welcome to it," said Lady Rossville, in some little embarrassment what to say next—"but this is a very sudden resolution of yours."

"I'm a great enemy to your long preparations, —a long warning is just a lingering parting, as Mr Whyte says, so farewell. God bless you, my dear! and take care of yourself," in a most emphatic and oracular tone—"take care of yourself, and,"—in a loud whisper, "if you would take an old friend's advice, you would dismiss at least *one* of your lovers," with a glance at Colonel Delmour, who, from the moment of her entrance, had been amusing himself with a musical snuff-box, which he continued to play off with the most unceasing attention, as if quite unconscious of her presence. Gertrude was leaving the room with Miss Pratt, to do the parting honour

to her guests—when looking up, he called—
“Shall I walk to the stables now, and examine the state of your stud, or shall I wait for you?”

“I am no judge of horses,” answered the Countess—“so I shall leave that department entirely to you,”—and she passed on to the saloon, before Miss Pratt could find words to express her indignation at finding he had already begun to interfere in the Rossville *ménage*. All was now leave-taking—regrets, compliments, promises and invitations, and final adieus—and the trio at length were wheeled off. Much solace they found in each other’s society during the drive, for each and all of them had something to animadvert upon as to the state of affairs at Rossville.

Uncle Adam missed Miss Pratt at dinner, and the kind message she had left for him with Mrs St Clair was not delivered. Lyndsay was out of spirits, and Lady Rossville was inattentive; and, in short, uncle Adam began to feel himself one too many. He was also within two pages of the end of Guy Mannering; and, there-

fore, upon retiring to his chamber, he sent off a line to the Blue Boar, desiring a chaise might be sent for him the following morning at six o'clock.

CHAPTER VI.

Ah ! what will not a woman do who loves !
What means will she refuse to keep that heart
Where all her joys are placed !

DRYDEN.

THE seeds of false shame were beginning to be sown in Lady Rossville's heart, and she was secretly pleased when she heard of uncle Adam's intended departure. She felt the contrast between Colonel Delmour and him was too much ; the gulf seemed impassable that was betwixt them, and it was painful to her to feel that she was ashamed of her uncle.

“ I wonder why I never felt this with Edward Lyndsay,” thought she ; “ it must be that he is not so refined in his ideas as Delmour,” and with that answer the thought passed away from her mind. She, however, pressed her uncle to wait breakfast, and to accept of her carriage to take

him home ; but he was resolute in taking his own way, which was commonly the most uncomfortable that could be contrived.

“ Fare ye weel,” said he, with something of softness in his look and manner ; “ ye want naething frae me, so you’ll tak naething.”

“ No, indeed, my dear uncle,” said Gertrude, affectionately shaking his hand, “ I do not require any thing ; but I shall always remember your kindness to me when I did ; “ I only wish I could make you as happy as—as I am myself,” added she, with a smile and a blush.

Mr Ramsay shook his head, and uttered something betwixt a groan and a hem.

“ Weel, weel, I wish it may last, but, ‘ rue and thyme grow baith in ae garden ;’ but I need nae fash to gi’e ye ony o’ my advice, for whan folk need naething else, they’ll no tak that ; so fare ye weel ;”—and with something amounting almost to a squeeze of the hand, in its own uncouth way, the uncle and niece parted. Her relief from the presence of her mother’s relations was, however, of short duration.

The following days were almost entirely devoted to business, for Lord Millbank and Mr Alex-

ander Black came to Rossville, and long meetings and discussions ensued, at many of which Gertrude was obliged to be present, to her and Colonel Delmour's infinite weariness and chagrin. His only solace, during the hours she was shut up from him, was in lounging about the house and grounds, devising plans of useless expence, which he longed impatiently to have put in execution. No views of beneficence or charity made any part of his schemes; his every idea centered in self-indulgence, and luxury and magnificence were all to which he looked as his recompense.

At length the business was brought to a conclusion, and Gertrude was once more at liberty, for Mrs St Clair, after several ineffectual attempts to gain the entire direction of her daughter, and the control of her every action, found it vain, and she was therefore obliged to carry the reins with a light hand, lest the Countess should have sought to free herself from them altogether.

Lyndsay alone, of all the guests, now remained, and he still lingered, as though loth to give her up entirely to the influence of Colonel Delmour. He was aware, that the heart cannot be long and exclusively devoted to one object, with-

out contracting somewhat of affinity towards it; and he sighed in bitterness of spirit, when he thought how Gertrude's nature, even now, with all its faults, so pure, so lofty, so generous, so amiable, would be debased and perverted by the baser alloy with which it mingled. What a different creature might she become under other guidance, so easily managed when her affections led the way!—what capacities of happiness for herself and others seemed now at stake!—But, alas! how misdirected, how useless, if not pernicious, might they become under such control!—and Lyndsay, unlike himself, became wavering and irresolute as to the part he ought to act. Every day seemed to increase the alienation betwixt Colonel Delmour and him; but on Lyndsay's part it was so calm and mild, so free from all wrath and bitterness, that it might have escaped notice altogether, but for the sort of repressed animosity which the other occasionally betrayed.

“Why is it,” said Lady Rossville one day to her lover, “that Edward and you are not better friends?—Has any misunderstanding taken place between you, for you are not even upon the same terms you were when I first saw you?—

then you walked, rode, shot, conversed together, but now you seem carefully to avoid all intercourse—it is unpleasant to me to witness this.”

“ ’Tis you yourself are the cause of it, Gertrude,” answered Colonel Delmour, warmly.—“ How can you imagine I can endure the sight of a man who, knowing the terms we are upon, yet presuming upon the encouragement you give him, dares to love you, and is, at this moment, planning to undermine me in your affections?—By Heaven, I think I am but too patient !”

“ Lyndsay love me !” exclaimed the Countess ; “ what a fancy !” but, at the same moment, a confused crowd of half-formed, half-forgotten thoughts rushed upon her mind, and raised a blush on her cheek, which did not escape Delmour’s notice.

“ Yes, in his own cold-blooded, methodistical way, not in the way I love you—to madness—to idolatry :—his existence, his soul, are not bound up in you as mine are ; but he would supplant me if he could.”

“ His love must, indeed, be of a different nature from yours,” said Lady Rossville, trying to laugh away Colonel Delmour’s roused passion.

“ for he has scarcely ever said a civil thing to me, and as for a compliment, I have sometimes tried whether I could not extort one from him, but never have succeeded. Nay, don't frown so, Delmour—if Lyndsay does not flatter, at least he never frowns.”

This remark did not dispel the cloud from her lover's brow ; on the contrary, he bit his lip, as if to repress the rising of his anger : after a few moments he said, in a subdued voice,—“ I have never flattered you, if by flattering you mean insincerity ; but I had flattered myself that you had been above practising those paltry arts by which so many women seek to enhance their value. I flattered myself, Gertrude, that you had been superior to coquetry ; but when I see you encouraging the attentions of one, who presumes to love you, even in the face of him to whom you have given your vows—one, too, whom you must know to be my enemy, can you wonder that I am sometimes driven to hate him, and almost to doubt whether you really love me ?”

“ Unjust, unkind !”—said Lady Rossville, turning from him in displeasure.

“ No, Gertrude, 'tis you who are unjust, un-

kind ; my heart is solely yours ; its every thought and wish centre in you ; but it *must* have yours —yours wholly and undivided in return ; less will not satisfy love such as mine.”

Lady Rossville remained silent, and Colonel Delmour’s agitation increased.

“ I see how it is,” cried he passionately ; “ his artful insinuations have prevailed ;—but he shall answer for this.”

Gertrude laid her hand upon his arm, while tears burst from her eyes.

“ Ah ! Delmour, if you love me as you say you do, why do you thus grieve me?—I would not for worlds willingly afflict you !”

“ But you do,” interrupted he ; “ you torture me to agony, and when I dare to complain, you reproach me.”

“ Tell me what it is you require of me, since all I have done and suffered for your sake is insufficient.”

“ All that I require of you, Gertrude, is, that you will not at least ask me to become the bosom-friend of one who, I know, seeks to undermine me in your affections—I cannot be the friend of a hypocrite.”

“ Edward a hypocrite !—Ah ! Delmour, how your passion misleads you !—He is all truth and openness—he is indeed——” then, after a pause, “ When I look back a few months, and think of the state of incertitude I was then in as to your faith and constancy—when at times my own was almost shaken by my doubts—at such a time had Lyndsay been what you suppose, had he sought to ingratiate himself with me—I do not know—I cannot tell—perhaps he might have gained an influence over me. But, indeed, he never tried, he never spoke to me as a lover ; but, on every occasion, he proved himself my friend,—as such I must always consider him.—Do not, then, dear Delmour, embitter my peace with any of those idle jealousies ; the time is past,” added she, with a smile, “ for Lyndsay to think of loving me now.”

“ But he does love you, Gertrude—I read it in the agitation he betrayed upon my arrival—he guessed his schemes would then be frustrated—he knew that I detested all underhand plots, and would come boldly forward, and bring matters to an issue. I did so—you have promised to be mine—he knows you have, and yet he would sup-

plant me if he could—And is it right in you, warned as you are of all this, to continue to encourage him, and lavish your attentions on him?”

“What can I do?” asked the Countess, beginning to give way to her lover’s vehemence, and to believe that she really was doing wrong;—
“What would you have me do?”

“Nay, it is not for me, Gertrude, to point out the line of conduct you ought to pursue, I leave that to yourself. I would have concealed from you, if I could, all that you have made me suffer; but when you call upon me to make a friend of the man who, in spite of our mutual vows, dares to love you ——”

“But this is mere fancy.”

“No—I speak from certainty. Gertrude, is it possible you can be so blind as not to have perceived it yourself?”

“Would that I were both blind and deaf to all the jarring elements, which are for ever threatening my peace,” said Lady Rossville sorrowfully—“How happy, how perfectly happy might I be but for the passions and the prejudices of others; but it is distracting to me to see all those I love thus at variance. If this is the ne-

cessary consequence of riches and grandeur, Oh ! how willingly would I exchange them for goodwill and mutual confidence !”—and the tears dropped from her eyes, as she leaned her head upon her hand.

“ Gertrude, dearest, most beloved, forgive me that I have thus distressed you—were you but mine, all these doubts would vanish ; but while it is in the power of malice or treachery yet to separate us, can you wonder that it requires all your love to still the tumults of my heart ? Call it suspicion—jealousy—what you will ; until you are once mine, your partiality for Lyndsay will constitute the torment of my life.”

“ And I must become unjust, ungrateful, to one to whom I owe so much ? Ah ! Delmour, at what a price must I satisfy you !”

CHAPTER VII.

Human faults with human grief confess
'Tis thou art chang'd——

PRIOR.

FROM this time, Gertrude's manner was wholly changed towards her cousin. Instead of the sweet smile with which she used to welcome him, her eyes were now commonly averted from him, and an air of constraint and embarrassment had succeeded the open, confiding carelessness which had hitherto marked their intercourse.

Lyndsay felt the change, and was at no loss to guess the cause. The books they had been reading together, the songs they used to sing together, were now discarded for others of Colonel Delmour's choice, and she read and sung with him, and with him only. The plans they had been carrying on together were stopped or overturned,

and others of a totally different nature were adopted.

“ Will you walk with me to-day, Gertrude ?” asked Lyndsay, one morning, when he accidentally was left alone with her ; it is long since you have seen your school-house, should you not like to look at it, and see what progress it has made since we last saw it together ?”

“ Certainly, I should like very much to see it ; but the phaeton and horses Colonel Delmour ordered for me have arrived, and I promised to take a drive with him.”

“ Perhaps you will drive that way, and I shall meet you there ?”

“ I am afraid it will not be possible ;” then, after a pause, she added, “ I am afraid you will think me very foolish and expensive, as you tell me I have not much money to squander ; but Colonel Delmour and I discovered such a lovely little spot lately on the banks of the river, just a little below the cascade you know, a sort of tiny Paradise, that the thought struck us both of making a sort of miniature of a *ferme ornée*, quite a baby-house thing, in fact—a sort of Lilliputian beau idéal of rustic life,” said she, attempting, by a

laugh, to hide her confusion, "with a flower-garden and all sorts of prettinesses, for you know flowers are my passion, and we appointed to meet some of the people there to-day, to talk and walk over it ; but I am afraid you will think——"

"You did not use to be so afraid of me, Gertrude," said Lyndsay mildly, but gravely ; "what have I done to inspire you with so much dread?"

"You know you are my guardian now," said she, with an assumed gaiety ; "of course, it is my duty to be a little afraid of you, especially when I know I deserve a scold."

"Well, you will be relieved from your fears, I shall leave you to-day."

"My dear cousin, I spoke but in jest," cried Gertrude, thrown off her guard, and relapsing into her natural manner.

"Not entirely," said Lyndsay, with a melancholy smile ; "but, whether you fear me or not, I feel you no longer look upon me as your friend."

"Indeed you wrong me," cried the Countess, in emotion ; "I never can cease to regard you as my friend, would you but become the friend of those who are dear to me."

“Impossible!” exclaimed Lyndsay, while a flush passed over his face, and he was for a moment silent; he then added, in a calmer tone, “I trust I am no one’s enemy—I wish well to all mankind, and so far I may style myself the friend of all; but, with some characters, farther I cannot go.”

Lady Rossville coloured deeply, and remained silent; but, from her look and air, she was evidently displeased.

“You distrust me, Gertrude,” said Lyndsay, at length breaking silence, “and that is worse than being afraid of me.”

“I am, perhaps, too little distrustful of any one,” answered she—“it is not my nature to suspect evil—I hope it never will—surely there are other marks by which we may know those who love us, than any that base suspicion can furnish us with.”

“Yes, and here is one,” said Lyndsay, taking a book from amongst a mass of French novels which lay upon the sofa-table. It was the *Life of Colonel Hutchinson*—and Lyndsay had begun to read it to her before Colonel Delmour’s arrival, since when it had lain neglected—“here

is a picture of true and faithful love ; who studies that may soon learn to distinguish the real from the counterfeit ;” and he read that simple description of the perfection of human attachment with an emotion which showed how deeply he felt it.

“ There is this only to be recorded, that never was there a passion more ardent and less idolatrous—he loved her better than his life, with inexpressible tenderness and kindness—had a most high and obliging esteeme of her—yet still considered honour, religion, and duty, above her, nor ever suffered the intrusion of such dotage, as should blind him from marking her imperfections ; these he looked on with such an indulgent eye, as did not abate his love and esteeme of her, while it augmented his care, and blotted out all those spots which might make her appeare lesse worthy of that respect he paid her.” *

He laid down the book, but Lady Rossville made no comment—she continued to busy herself arranging some fine forced flowers, which had just been brought her, in a vase, and seemed to give

* Life of Colonel Hutchinson.

her whole attention to them. This continued for some minutes, and Lyndsay made no attempt to interrupt her; but, on hearing the sound of a carriage, she raised her head, and saw the phæton driven by Colonel Delmour, and drawn by four beautiful horses, followed by two grooms, mounted on two of the same set. A throb of pride and pleasure was felt at her heart, as she looked at the elegant bauble which had stopped opposite the saloon; and as she threw open the sash with childish delight, Delmour called to her, to know if she was ready. She answered in the affirmative, and was leaving the room to put on her things, when Lyndsay said—

“Is it thus, then, we are to part, Gertrude, after all the pleasant friendly days we have passed together?”

Lady Rossville stopped, and turned towards him—“You are not serious in thinking of leaving us to-day?”

“I am, indeed, perfectly so.”

“At least, stay till to-morrow—this is such a strange hurried way of leaving us—pray, give us one day more?”

“I would give you many days if they could be

of service to you, but that cannot be ; forgive me, my dear cousin, if I have pained you—farewell—God bless you.”

Gertrude’s heart swelled, and the tear started to her eye, as she returned the affectionate pressure of her cousin’s hand—but she repressed her emotion—

“ You will come again soon,” said she—but Lyndsay made no reply, and they parted.

“ I fear I have not done as I ought,” thought Gertrude with a sigh, but in another moment the thought was gone, and she was seated by her lover. The equipage was perfect, the day was beautiful, all was gaiety and brightness—Colonel Delmour was more than usually delightful, and Lyndsay was forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

Serment d'aimer toujours, ou de n'aimer jamais, me paroît un peu téméraire.

VOLTAIRE.

SEVERAL days passed in the same maner, and every day some new scheme of useless profusion was suggested by Colonel Delmour, and adopted by the Countess. New stables must be built to accommodate the additional number of horses he declared to be absolutely necessary ; the present billiard-room was inconvenient, a new one would cost a mere trifle ; there was no good music-room, and there was no living in the country without a private theatre ; the present library might be turned into a conservatory, and the smooth green bank, which sloped gradually down to the river, must be changed into an Italian garden, with hanging terraces and marble fountains, and he

sketched a design of the whole so beautiful, that the Countess was in ecstasies.

Mrs St Clair witnessed all this with very different feelings ; but she saw the ascendancy Colonel Delmour had gained over her daughter was absolute, and she feared to come to extremities with either of them, lest it should prove the means of throwing her more completely into his power, and he might prevail upon her to unite herself to him, notwithstanding her promise to the contrary. She had remonstrated with both on the impropriety of Colonel Delmour continuing to reside at Rossville in the present situation of the family ; but her words produced no effect, till, at length, finding she could not dislodge him, she formed the resolution of taking Lady Rosville to London, as the best means of detaching her, in some degree, from him. She thought of Lyndsay's words too, " Let her see others no less gifted than he is,"—and she thought it was not impossible that a change might be wrought in Gertrude's sentiments ; at least, there was more likelihood of its being effected amidst the novelty and variety of the metropolis, than in the romantic seclusion of Rossville.

This resolution caused infinite chagrin to the lovers. To Gertrude's young enthusiastic heart, all happiness seemed centered in the spot which contained herself and the idol of her affections ; and although the mere inanimate objects of nature, woods, rocks, water, are in themselves nothing, yet, combined with the associations of fancy and memory, they acquire a powerful hold upon our hearts. Every step to her was fraught with fond ideas ! for it was at Rossville her feelings had been most powerfully excited, whether to joy or sadness, and Rossville, its trees, its banks, its flowers, seemed all entwined with her very existence. It is thus, when the heart is exclusively occupied with one object, it clings with fond tenacity to every circumstance connected with it.

“ Ah, mama,” said she, with a sigh, “ how sad to think of leaving Rossville, when it is just beginning to burst forth in all its beauty ; and to immure ourselves amidst the stone, and lime, and smoke, and dust of London : do only look at these almond trees and poplars.”

But Mrs St Clair put it on the footing of her health, which required change of air and scene

and a consultation of the London Faculty ; and her daughter could say no more.

Colonel Delmour shared in her regrets ; but his arose from a different cause : his heart was too worldly and sophisticated to participate in those pure and simple pleasures, which imparted such delight to hers. But he was aware of the admiration Gertrude would excite when she made her appearance in London ; and he was unwilling that she should be seen there until she should be introduced as his wife. He thought too well of himself and her, to dread any rival in her affections ; but still the gay world was very unfavourable to the growth of sentiment ; there was a multiplicity of objects—a diversity of amusements—a glare, a glitter and bustle, that could not fail to distract her attention, and weaken the strength of that exclusive attachment she now cherished for him ; and, selfish and engrossing as he was, he felt the charm would be diminished, were the devotion lessened.

But, in his murmurs and repinings, Gertrude heard only the same tender regrets which filled her own heart even to overflowing, and she loved him the more, for this sympathy in her feelings.

The day before that on which they were to set off was the Countess's birth-day, but she would not have it observed.

"This day two years, it shall be celebrated gaily, nobly, if you will," said she.

"And must this one pass away, like other vulgar hours," said Delmour, "without a single memorial to distinguish it from common days? Poor that I am, I have not even the most trifling memento to lay at your feet."

"I will not tax you so unmercifully, as did the ladies of old their lovers," said the Countess, with a smile; "I want neither a dragon's scale nor a hydra's head, nor even a glass of singing-water, nor a branch of a talking-tree; but you shall bring me, from the green-house, a rose *unique*, and that shall be my only gaud to-day."

Colonel Delmour brought the rose. Lady Rossville drew from her finger a rare and costly gem, which had belonged to the late Earl.

"Such tokens are but mere vulgar and oft-repeated emblems of an old story," said she, "from Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex down to the milkmaid and her 'rush ring;' but it will mark the day, will it not? and if you should turn

rebel, or I tyrant—you must choose some more faithful messenger than poor Essex did; and that's all the moral of my tale."

"Woe to the hand that shall ever seek to wear this while I live!" exclaimed Delmour, as he pressed it to his lip, and then placed it on his finger.

Lady Rossville's sole ornament when she appeared at dinner was the rose *unique*; but the heat of the room caused it to expand too quickly, and the leaves dropped suddenly away.

"Happily my nurse could never succeed in making me superstitious," said she, in a low voice, to Colonel Delmour, "else I should have looked on this as some fatal omen."

"The prodigy is," answered he with a smile, "that either the rose *unique* has suddenly expired of envy at finding itself so eclipsed by the wearer, or—that your gardener forces his flowers too much."

"I fear the latter is the true cause," answered the Countess laughing, "and it is my own fault, for I never have patience to wait the gradual growth of any thing. I am for every thing starting into full-blown perfection at once."

“ Yes, you say true,” said Mrs St Clair significantly, as she caught her daughter’s last words, —“ art seems to carry the day with you in all things, Gertrude ; ’tis well you are beginning to discover your own foible.”

Colonel Delmour bit his lip, and the Countess blushed with wounded feeling, as she bent her head to pick up some of the scattered rose leaves.

CHAPTER IX.

Une personne à la mode n'a de prix et de beauté que ce qu'elle emprunte d'un caprice léger qui naît et qui tombe presque dans le même instant : aujourd'hui elle est courue, les femmes s'en parent ; demain elle est négligée, et rendue au peuple.

LA BRUYERE.

LADY ROSSVILLE's departure from the home of her fathers called forth the regrets and the lamentations of the poor ; for although her attentions towards them had somewhat relaxed since Colonel Delmour's arrival, yet she had done enough under Lyndsay's auspices, to render herself completely beloved by them. The various works, too, which she had begun, all in the spirit of profuseness and self-gratification, contributed for the present to her popularity, and she flattered herself, that she was equally actuated by beneficence and humanity, although they had taken a different direction under her lover, from what they had done under her cousin's guidance.

She sent splendid rather than suitable gifts to her aunts, and her cousin Anne, and directed that the former should be constantly supplied with the choicest of fruits and flowers from Rossville. She felt unwilling to depart without sending some remembrance to Lyndsay—some little token of her gratitude for all she owed him of generous interference—of time, and trouble, and kindness hitherto but ill requited; yet she feared to mention the subject before Colonel Delmour, aware of the jealous irritability it might excite. At length the thought struck her, to send him a picture of his mother, which was the most admired and conspicuous of any of the family portraits. It was a Sir Joshua, and done at a time when the subject was in all the graces of early beauty, and the artist in all the fulness of his perfection. The picture was, therefore, not merely precious as a portrait, but was valuable in itself, as most of that great master's works are, on account of its own intrinsic beauty. "There is something of Lyndsay in the half-melancholy, half-smiling expression of those dark eyes," thought Gertrude, as she looked on the picture; "something, too, of his reproachful look," added she, with a sigh,

as her heart told her he had cause to reproach her.

She wrote a few lines to accompany the picture, which was to be packed and sent, after she was gone ; and then, all being arranged, she bade adieu to Rossville, and the tears stood in her eyes as she looked on its budding woods and sparkling waters, in the soft rays of vernal sunshine.

Mrs St Clair had peremptorily refused permission to Colonel Delmour to accompany them to London, and Gertrude had at once conceded that point to her mother. However much chagrined, he was, therefore, obliged to acquiesce, and as his rate of travelling was rather more rapid than theirs, he preceded them by several days, and (apprised by a note from the Countess of their approach to the metropolis) was at the hotel ready to receive them on their arrival.

The following day, he brought his mother and sister to introduce them to Gertrude. She had anticipated the meeting with that trepidation natural to one so situated, but her timidity was soon dispelled by the pleasant social manners of Lady Augusta, and the lively, good-humoured frankness of her

daughters. There was much to attract, and nothing to be afraid of, and before they had been half an hour together, Gertrude felt as though she were already one of themselves. They were pressed to dine with Lady Augusta in Brook Street, but Mrs St Clair declared herself too much fatigued with the journey for such an exertion, and Gertrude resisted their entreaties, out of compliment to her mother. They were, however, to meet the following day, when something was to be fixed, and after much talking, and a great display of affection on both sides between the cousins, they parted. Even Mrs St Clair was more pleased with them than she cared to admit to herself, for they had paid her more attention than she was accustomed to receive, and had they not been Colonel Delmour's mother and sisters, she would have been loud in her praises of them. Gertrude spoke of them to her lover with all the warmth she felt, but he appeared but little gratified by her commendations: "You do not seem sufficiently sensible how charming they are," said she; "you did not say half enough in their praise."

"I told you you would find Lady Augusta a

very good-looking, well-bred person, did I not?" said he with a smile, "and the girls very gay, and good-humoured, and very like other girls."

"O, more than that! Lady Augusta is very delightful, and your sisters,—how much more agreeable they are, for instance, than the Miss Millbanks."

"Are they? yes, by-the-bye, the Miss Millbanks are very Scotch, indeed; but most Misses, Scotch or English, are pretty much alike."

A house had been procured in Park Lane; Mrs St Clair thought it too magnificent, and too expensive; but Colonel Delmour approved of it, Lady Rossville admired it, and the house was taken. Then came equipages, horses, liveries, in short, an establishment, in which taste and splendour only were consulted without any regard to the means, which indeed Gertrude herself believed to be inexhaustible, and which Delmour, with the reckless profusion of selfish extravagance, thought not about at all. Since Lady Rossville was to appear in the world, his only anxiety was that she should, at the first, take her place at the very head of the fashionable world; aware, that if she once entered in an inferior *grade*, she

might not afterwards, even as his wife, be able to attain the proud pre-eminence of ton, which, of all pre-eminences, is the one most esteemed in the great world.

“Lady Augusta has kindly offered to introduce me to her milliner and jeweller, and all sorts of useful people,” said Gertrude to him one day, —“and in the evening she proposes that mama and I should accompany her to the opera.”

Colonel Delmour received this information rather dryly, and seemed to hesitate in his reply. At last he said—“I have a great respect for Lady Augusta’s good sense, and good intentions; but really her trades-people are so perfectly antediluvian, that you will oblige me by having nothing to do with them.”

Gertrude was disposed to take this as a joke, but that she saw he was serious. “Lady Augusta does not dress in good taste,” continued he —“and as for the girls, they can scarcely be said to have a taste at all—they stick themselves over with feathers, or flowers, or butterflies, or any thing that comes in their way.—Emily rather carries it off well; but poor Georgy looks as if her ornaments had been actually blown upon her.”

“ But how can I refuse so polite an offer ?— and, besides, I don’t know who are the people to employ.”

“ Leave all that to me, or rather to a friend of mine, Lady Charles Arabin, who comes to town to-morrow, and whom I shall bring to visit you immediately.”—Seeing Gertrude look surprised, he added—“ She is not handsome, and is rather *passée* ; but she has the best air and taste of any body in town—in fact, she gives the tone at present to every thing ; and, therefore, I would rather that you took her as your guide, than Lady Augusta, that is, in all matters of mere taste and fashion.”

“ But I have a taste of my own in dress,” said Lady Rossville, half-displeased at the idea of being obliged to submit to the decision of another.

“ And a perfect one,” said Colonel Delmour ; “ but taste alone won’t do without fashion. Venus herself, even attired by the Graces, would be thought *maussade*, were she to be introduced by a Duchess, who had been excluded from Almack’s, or who had never supped at D—— house.”

“ Then, who can value the blind admiration

of the multitude?" said Gertrude;—"not I, indeed;—'tis much too paltry a triumph for me to take any trouble to acquire. I care not a straw for such empty distinctions, and would rather have the approbation of *your* mother, than of the whole fashionable world."

"What a word for you!" said Delmour, laughing—"Approbation is a very good thing in itself, and a very useful school-word; but for you, Gertrude, with your charms and your graces to be approved of! No, you must be followed, admired, adored, worshipped."

"I am afraid 'tis in your imagination alone I stand any chance for being deified," said Gertrude smiling—"so I shall certainly not start a candidate for immortal honours. I am not ambitious, Delmour, and shall be satisfied with your homage and true affections, since you will not allow me the approbation of your family."

"But I am proud, and vain, and ambitious of, and for you, dearest Gertrude," said Delmour gaily, "and must not suffer your partiality for me and my family to detract from the brilliancy of your star."

"But I would rather be introduced by them

than by any one else ;—if Lady Augusta does not mix much in society, there is your aunt, the Duchess of Burlington.”

“ Worse and worse,” cried Delmour—“ I would rather you never appeared at all, than have you brought out by her.”

“ Why so ?” asked Gertrude in some surprise —“ Is she not respectable ?”

Colonel Delmour could scarcely preserve his gravity at the question, as he replied—“ Respectability, like approbation, is a thing of no account here—it gives no consequence whatever to its possessor.”

“ Then, what precious gifts of nature, or acquirements of art, are they which do give consequence in this magic circle of yours ?” said the Countess.

“ That nameless *je ne sai quoi* which all admire, but none can define, and which unfortunately my highly respectable relations want. The Duchess is an excellent person in her way, but she is antiquated in her notions, dresses shockingly, gives parties where I should blush to be detected, and I should be undone were I to be seen offering her my arm in public.”

This was said in a sportive manner, which made Gertrude look upon it as a jest.

“Then I may scarcely expect to be acknowledged by you to-night,” said she, in the same tone. “Perhaps it would be your ruin also were you to be seen in Lady Augusta’s box talking to, or, it may be, handing out a Scotch cousin.”

Colonel Delmour looked grave.

“You will really oblige me,” said he, “if you will decline going into public for a day or two; although I have been talking mere nonsense on the subject, yet, I do assure you, a first introduction is of more consequence than you at present are aware of.”

“Consequence !” repeated Gertrude, contemptuously ; “if I am not entitled to be of consequence on my own account, I certainly do not wish to derive it from Lady Charles Arabin.”

“You mistake the matter entirely, dearest Gertrude ; I am desirous you should appear with that effect which you are so well entitled to produce, but which you will derive much more from your beauty and your grace than from your rank. I cannot exactly make one so unsophisticated as you

comprehend the arbitrary and capricious mechanism of the fashionable world."

"No, pray do not attempt it. I am sure I shall never be fashionable. Ah! Delmour, it was not thus we talked and felt at dear Rossville! What was the world to us there?"

"Would to Heaven we were there now!" said Delmour, echoing her sigh; "but you mistake me, Gertrude; it is not that I place the world in competition with you, but that I abhor the thoughts of your preference for me, lowering you in the slightest degree. You have every thing that entitles you to take the first place in the best society; but, absurd as it seems, I must candidly confess to you, that my family, although high in rank and fair in character, cannot do you justice in that respect. I keep clear of all that sort of thing; but if once you get into their circle, you will be shackled eternally with bad parties and acquaintances that will keep all the best people aloof; for instance, Lady Augusta *would* introduce the girls into the Burlington set; the consequence is, they are eternally followed by men with whom I don't associate; in short, secondary men, whom they are forced to smile on *faute de mieux*; but

that must not be with you, Gertrude—you have already given up too much for me ; do not, as you love me, add yet more to the self-reproach I sometimes feel for having suffered you to sacrifice so much.”

“ The feeling is a generous, a noble one ; but I cannot help thinking it a mistaken one,” said the Countess : “ but, since you are so scrupulous, I shall yield the point ; make me, then, what you will, only, pray don’t make me a fine lady.”

Colonel Delmour was all rapture and gratitude, and only left her to go and inform his mother, that Lady Rossville had caught cold, and was unable to fulfil her engagements ; his sisters visited her in the course of the day, and Gertrude blushed with shame as she attempted to confirm the falsehood.

“ I half suspect,” said Georgiana, laughing, “ that Master Fred. has been telling you that mama is not fashionable ; he is so admired and *recherché* himself, that we think he gives himself airs : so, pray don’t encourage him, or you will spoil him entirely.”

“ It is so provoking,” said Miss Emily, “ that

he won't allow you to go with us ; for, I can see, it is he that prevents you from going with us to Kitchener's this morning, he has some such exquisite things just now !—things really to die for !" with a deep sigh.

" Since that is the case," said Gertrude, smiling, " I am fortunate in having escaped the danger : but, if you are not afraid to encounter it, you shall each of you choose something for me, according to your own taste, and then I shall see how far we agree."

" How happy you must be, who can afford to choose what you like !" said both sisters, sorrowfully.

" For, to-day, I devolve my happiness upon you," said Lady Rossville ; " only remember to choose exactly what you should like for yourselves."

The sisters departed, delighted with the commission, and not without some latent suspicion as to the result of their choice, which was verified by each receiving the very handsome and expensive articles of jewellery they had selected.

CHAPTER X.

The stage is pleasant, and the way seems short,
All strew'd with flowers;
The days appear but hours,
Being spent in time beguiling sport.
Here griefs do neither press, nor doubts perplex;
Here's neither fear to curb, nor care to vex.

QUARLES.

PERHAPS no woman ever heard another highly commended by her lover, without feeling, at least, a slight sensation of pique and jealousy, and something of this sort Gertrude had begun to cherish against Lady Charles Arabin before she saw her. She was, therefore, prepared to receive her with something of the air and manner with which a pretty spoiled child might be supposed to welcome its governess; and, unknown to herself, there was a *tournure* of the head, a colour on the cheek, a slight pout on the lip, when that Lady and Colonel Delmour were an-

nounced together. But the first glance at Lady Charles instantly dispelled all her fears, and thick coming fancies ; as she beheld (what in common life would be called) a middle-aged woman, without any pretensions to beauty, beyond a tolerably regular set of features, and a figure, which, though evidently of a fine structure, was thin, almost to meagreness. Her dress was striking without being singular—her manners were quiet, but perfectly elegant, and the *tout ensemble* conveyed that impression of high birth and high breeding, which is something too subtle and refined to be described or analyzed ; something of so delicate and impalpable a nature, that it might sometimes escape notice altogether, but for the effect it produces upon others. Gertrude had never felt that her mother was vulgar, till she contrasted the florid pomposity of her manner with the ease, grace, and simplicity of Lady Charles Arabin ; she spoke little, and there was nothing in her conversation beyond the frivolous chit-chat of the day ; but her voice and accent were both fine, and she skimmed over subjects with an airy lightness, that would have baffled any thing like discussion, even had any one been so inclined. She invited Ger-

trude to take a drive with her, to which she readily acceded, notwithstanding Mrs St Clair's manifest displeasure, which, however, she did not venture to express.

That lady was considerably annoyed by the manners of Lady Charles, which made her feel her own as something unwieldy and overgrown—like a long train, they were both out of the way and in the way, and she did not know very well how to dispose of them. Indeed, few things can be more irritating than for those, who have hitherto piqued themselves upon the abundance of their manner, to find all at once that they have a great deal too much; that no one is inclined to take it off their hands, and that, in short, it is dead stock.

Lady Charles took leave, but Gertrude stopped a moment in the drawing-room behind her companions, to say a few coaxing words to her mother; then, as she hurried to overtake them, she heard Lady Charles say, as in answer to some remark of Colonel Delmour, “She is perfect!” and she blushed as she caught the meaning glance he turned to cast upon her. Much was done in the way of shopping; a variety of splendid dresses

were ordered ; a great deal of *bijouterie* was purchased, and Gertrude was whirled from place to place, and from shop to shop, till her head was almost turned with the varied and bustling scenes, in which she was acting, for the first time, a part.

It is not at first that London either astonishes or delights. It is too vast and too complicated to be taken in all at once either by the eye or the mind ; and it requires a little schooling to enjoy even the variety and the brilliancy of its pleasures, as they flash in rapid and never-ceasing succession on the bewildered senses. Lady Rosville, like all novices, felt something of this ; and she sighed for the peaceful romantic seclusion of her own domain, where she was all in all, and where her lover was all to her. But it is not the young and admired who can stand long on the brink of pleasure, indulging their own sentimental reveries ; and Gertrude with all her feeling, and romance, and enthusiasm, was soon in the vortex of elegant dissipation.

Borne like a feather on the tide of fashionable celebrity, she was hurried along she knew not whither ; while at the same time, wherever she went, she

was hailed as the leader of every favourite folly. She was the idol of the day, and she breathed only in an atmosphere of adulation, baleful alike in its effects on the head and the heart. Amidst the delusions of the senses, she forgot every thing save her lover ; but even when all looks were turned upon her, as the magnet of the glittering throng, it was in his eyes only, that she sought to read her triumph. Although her engagement with Colonel Delmour was pretty generally understood, and he had all the bearing of the accepted lover ; still that did not prevent others from entering the lists ; but, on the contrary, was rather an additional attraction—and men far superior to himself in rank and station, and some of them not much his inferiors in personal endowments, had declared themselves her lovers. But even Delmour, jealous and irritable as he was, felt that he had no cause to dread a rival in her affections. Mr Delmour and she had only met once, and that at a formal dinner at the Duke of Burlington's, where they had merely exchanged the common courtesies of acquaintanceship. He was evidently of the family school ; the Duke and Duchess being formal, dull personages, living in

a vast and stately mansion, amidst a profusion of magnificent heir-looms of every description.

“ That *would* have been an establishment for you, Gertrude,” sighed her mother, as they left the mansion, where she had felt more at home than amidst the gay unattainable ease of fashionable manners ; “ what madness to reject so magnificent a lot, but even yet——”

“ O ! mama, beware how you utter even a hope on that subject, unless you would raise the shades of the whole race of the mighty departed Delmours. I have been thinking how fortunate it is that I am destined to be a mere scion on that noble stock ;—how could I ever have sustained the whole weight of the family dignity ! I protest I have got a crick in my neck with only looking at and imagining the weight of the Duchess’s old-fashioned diamond necklace ;” and Gertrude said to herself that Colonel Delmour was quite right in wishing to preserve her from his family circle.

She now gave herself up with greater zest than ever, to the round of frivolous occupations and amusements, which form the sole business of so many an immortal being’s existence, and which are no less fascinating to the unreflecting mind,

than they are vain and unsatisfying to the eye of reason and experience. It was to no purpose that Mrs St Clair remonstrated, and threatened, and denounced—her power was gone ;—she never had possessed the affection of the daughter, and she had now lost the control of authority. Besides, the Countess afforded her little time or opportunity, to expatiate on her extravagances ;—she lived in such an unceasing whirl, that Mrs St Clair had in vain strove to keep pace with her. She had been obliged to relinquish the attempt—their hours did not keep time, and their engagements were in opposite spheres—each had their apartments—their carriages—their society—and Gertrude felt satisfied, that her mother had all these things, and was also noticed by, and, indeed, in habits of intimacy, with Colonel Delmour's family. Her own mornings were spent in sitting to half the sculptors and painters in town for busts and pictures, in all possible variety, to please the fastidious taste of her lover ;—in riding in the Park with him, or in shopping with Lady Charles, or some other frivolous idler ;—in the evening, there were dinners, and parties, and balls, and operas, and assemblies, in such quick

succession, as left her scarcely conscious of having been at one before she found herself at some other.

“ Confess this is to live,” said Delmour to her one evening, as he led her from one gay multitude, where she had been the admired of all admirers, to another, where her appearance would excite an equal sensation.

“ All that is wanting,” replied she with a smile, “ is time to feel one’s enjoyment ; but I can scarcely tell whether I chase pleasure, or it chases me, or whether we are running a race, or—in short, how we go on together.”

“ Take a ride with me to-morrow in the Park, and we shall go at a sober foot-pace, that you may have time to find out,” said Delmour.

“ But to-morrow I give Lawrence another sitting——”

“ Take the ride first, and you will go to him with a bloom that will make him burn his pallet.”

CHAPTER XI.

All these inconveniences are incident to love; reproaches, jealousies, quarrels, reconcilements, war—and then peace.

TERENCE.

THE Countess smiled a consent, and Colonel Delmour was at her breakfast table the following morning. A salver stood upon it covered with cards, notes, letters, bills, petitions, and memoranda of every description. She carelessly tossed over some, opened and glanced over others, while she listened at the same time to her lover, as he read the record of her triumphs in the Morning Post. At length, as she discovered some post letters amid the heap, she drew back her hand, and, with a shudder, exclaimed—

“ Ah ! these ugly letters ! ”

“ What letters ? ” inquired Delmour, as he, at the same time, drew the stand towards himself.—
“ O ! some Scotch parish business, is that all ? ”

“ Lectures from my guardians and tiresome explanations from my steward are the best I have to expect. I had a letter from him t’other day, telling me the school-house was stopped for want of money.”

“ How very distressing !” said Colonel Delmour, with an ironical smile ;—“ then you will have no long, lean, grey, weeping-looking building, with its steep, straight roof, and its little green glass windows, and its shoals of hoddy-doddy, white-haired, blubbered boys and girls.—I hope it was to have formed a vista in the park ; it would have been what is called, I believe, a most gratifying sight.”

“ You are very kind to try to reconcile me to myself by treating it so slightly ; but I feel I have been to blame ; I have been too expensive.”

“ In what respect ?”

“ In every thing—this service, for instance,” pointing to the magnificent breakfast service of richly chased antique plate and Sèvres china—“ I am shocked to think how much it cost.”

“ Why delft, to be sure, would have been cheaper—and, to the philosophic eye, a pewter

basin is as becoming, perhaps, as a silver one—'tis a pity you did not consult me instead of Lady Charles about it !”

“ Lady Charles is certainly very extravagant,” said the Countess gravely.

“ Not more so than others in her rank. Lord Charles has a good fortune, and allows her to spend it, which she does in supporting her station in society.—Methodists and misers, I believe, are for abolishing all these distinctions, and building conventicles, and endowing hospitals with their money.”

“ One of these letters, I perceive, is from Lyndsay,” said Gertrude, with another sigh.

“ Which you seem afraid even to look upon—Shall I open it for you ?”

“ Do—but first give Zoe a few of these strawberries.”

Colonel Delmour read the letter aloud—it was short and hurried, and the purport of it was communicating the sudden death of the parish minister of Rossville, by which means the Countess would have it in her power to provide for young Leslie, who had just been with him bespeaking his good offices.

“Who is this Leslie who finds such a patron in Lyndsay?” inquired Colonel Delmour.

“He is a very interesting young man, who is engaged to my cousin, Anne Black, and the want of a church has hitherto been the only obstacle to the marriage—How happy it makes me to have it in my power to remove it—Pray, reach me my writing stand, and I shall settle that *sur le champ*.”

But instead of obeying, Delmour took the hand she had impatiently extended, and said—

“Is it possible, my dear Gertrude, you can be serious in this? Can you really think, for a moment, of having your relations placed so near you in so inferior a situation? Only consider, the manse is almost close by the gate—that is of little consequence with people who have no claim upon you; but really the Countess of Rossville and her cousin, the minister’s wife, thus brought in contact, there is confusion in the thought.”

Lady Rossville looked displeased, then said,—
“My cousin is a person I never can feel ashamed of.”

“Not as she is; but as she will be, when she degenerates into the minister’s wife with her printed

gown and black mittens, with a troop of half-licked cubs of children at her heels, and the minister himself, honest man ! at their head, with his lank locks, and his customary suit of rusty blacks, all coming to visit, perchance to dine with their cousin the Countess !”

“ If you are ashamed of my relations, you ought to have said so sooner,” said Gertrude, struggling with her emotion ; “ as it is, it is not yet too late——”

“ Dearest Gertrude, how seriously you take my *badinage* ; but you must be sensible that, where the difference of rank and station is so great between near relations, the local affinity had as well not be quite so close ; your own good sense and delicate perception must point out to you the inevitable *disagréments* that must ensue ; the slights that will be felt ; the offences that will be taken ; the affronts that will be imagined.”

“ My cousin is not a person of that sort,” said Gertrude ; “ and, I am sure, her near vicinity would be a source of great pleasure to me. I like her society, and should have her often with me.”

“ You may at present ; but, be assured, that could not possibly continue ; you must move in

such different spheres, and must associate with such different people, that 'tis impossible you could act or think alike : For instance, you told me that the Duchess of Arlingham, the Arabins, Lady Peverley, Mrs Becchey, and I know not all who, had promised to pay you a visit at Rossville this summer, and to take parts in your theatricals, if you can have the theatre ready ; how do you suppose the minister and his wife could relish, or be relished by those of your friends ?”

“ But I am in a manner pledged to my cousin——”

“ Not for this church, surely ?”

“ No ; not for this one in particular ; but I repeatedly assured her that, whenever I had it in my power, I would befriend her, and now it is so——”

“ Dearest Gertrude, it is *not* in your power, that is, if I possess that influence with you, I have hitherto flattered myself I did ; on that faith, in the transaction I had lately with Harry Monteith relating to my exchange into the Guards, I ventured to promise that the first church that was in your gift, as the phrase is, you would—that is—I would engage your inter-

est in behalf of his old tutor—quite a charity case, as he represented it ; a married man with a large family, and I forget all the particulars ; but, at the time, it struck me as a thing that would interest you.”

Lady Rossville’s colour rose during this speech, and for some moments she remained silent, as if struggling with her feelings ; at last she said—“ You have taken a strange liberty, it seems, and one which I cannot easily pardon.”

At that moment a servant entered to say her Ladyship’s horses were at the door.

“ Desire them to be put up ; I shall not ride to-day,” said she, and taking up Lyndsay’s letter, she quitted the room, leaving Delmour too much piqued, as well as surprised at this display of spirit to make any attempt to detain her. He, however, lounged a considerable time at the breakfast-table, expecting her return, tossed over all the litter of new publications, and music, and expensive toys that lay scattered about ; touched her harp to ascertain whether it were in tune, and broke two of the strings ; stirred the fire, although the room was suffocating ; then threw open a window, exclaiming at the smell of a tuberosc ; but

still Gertrude did not return, carriage after carriage was sent from the door, and even Lady Charles was not admitted. At length his patience was exhausted, he wrote—"Dearest Gertrude, see me but for one moment as you love me," and ringing the bell, he desired it might be conveyed to Lady Rossville. A verbal answer was returned; her ladyship was sorry she was particularly engaged, and Delmour, too proud to sue any further, left the house in a transport of indignation.

CHAPTER XII.

Is Nature's course dissolv'd ? Doth Time's glass stand ?
Or hath some frolic heart set back the hand
Of Fate's perpetual clock ? Will't never strike ?
Is crazy Time grown lazy, faint, or sick,
With very age ?

QUARLES.

GERTRUDE, too, was proud in her way, and her feelings had been severely wounded. She had already become sufficiently *fine* to be able to feel, in some degree, the truth of what Delmour had said in regard to her relations ; but she was piqued that *he* should have been the person to force so disagreeable a conviction upon her—he who had so often declared that she was all the universe to him—and whose favourite maxim it was, that love could see no defects in aught pertaining to the object beloved. How often had he repeated to her, when she smilingly chid his flatteries,—“ O que les illusions de

l'amour sont amiables ! Les flatteries sont en un sens des vérités—le jugement se tait, mais le cœur parle !” Why was it then, that he was become so clear-sighted as thus to anticipate these paltry feelings of wounded vanity ?—and to have presumed so far already as to have usurped her power—to have promised away in her name, without leave asked or obtained, a gift of so much importance—one which she might have had a pleasure in conferring at his solicitation, but which it would be weakness to allow to be thus wrested from her. “Lyndsay would not have acted thus !” thought she, as she looked at his letter, and a tear dropt upon it. She leant her head upon her hand, and for the first time since her arrival in London, fell into a train of reflection, from which she only roused herself to begin an answer to his letter. But she had only got as far as—“*My Dear Cousin,—I am happy to have it in my power—*” when Colonel Delmour’s billet was brought to her. She read it, and wavered.—“No, I will not see him,” thought she proudly, at this triumph over her already returning tenderness.—“But I will not finish my letter to Lyndsay till to-morrow—one

day can make no difference, and 'tis almost time to go to Lawrence's." She rang, and ordered the carriage—then drove to Lady Augusta's to get one of the girls to accompany her. As they drove along, Delmour passed on horseback, and merely bowed, with an air of lofty respect.

"Fred. seems to be on his high horse to-day," said Miss Georgiana, laughing; "I told you he would give himself airs; but"—looking after him—"he certainly is the handsomest man in town, and unquestionably the most admired and imitated. *Apropos*, have you seen the Duchess of St Ives?—I hear she has already doffed her weeds, and come out in all her glory. Delmour was an admirer of hers you must know in her married state—at least, so the ill-natured world said. I know she is desperately in love with him, and I believe, would marry him to-morrow if he would ask her; so she will be ready to poison you, or pierce you to the heart perhaps, with a bodkin, as the ladies in old ballads used to do their rivals."

There certainly was nothing in this that ought to have gratified a mind in a right state of feeling; it was food for a perverted taste only;

but how often are the passions and the prejudices gratified at the expence of the principles! Gertrude's vanity was pleased to hear her lover praised, and her pride was piqued to show her triumph over the Duchess of St Ives.

These two ladies had met, exchanged cards, and graced each other's parties, but a mutual and instinctive sort of antipathy had, from the first, existed between them. They were both young, beautiful, distinguished, and independent; rivals in celebrity and extravagance, Gertrude learnt for the first time, that they were also rivals in love, and a momentary pang shot across her breast at the discovery. But hers was not a nature to harbour jealous fears, and she soon dismissed them.

"No," thought she, "whatever Delmour's faults may be, I should wrong him were I to doubt his love and truth;" and she recollected some slighting and satirical remarks he had made upon the Duchess the evening before. She, therefore, listened with complacency, while Miss Delmour rattled away about the Duchess—her beauty—her pride—her parties—her diamonds—her join-

ture—her independence of all control—and, to sum up the whole, she concluded, with a sigh—

“ Do you know, I never see the Duchess of St Ives that I do not wish I had been born a widow.”

When Gertrude returned home it was in the secret hope of hearing that Colonel Delmour had called during her absence.

“ Has anybody called since I went out ?” inquired she of her porter, as she entered the hall.

“ O, surely, my Lady !” replied he, in some surprise at such a question, as he pointed to a pile of cards.

“ No one else ?” as she tossed them over with an air of chagrin.

“ No, my Lady !” in the same tone of amazement at being, for the first time, so strictly interrogated on the duties of his office.

“ He may have called, although that stupid man has forgot to mention it,” thought she ; “ and he will probably call again—it is not very late. Those French clocks and watches are always wrong”—as they told a different tale—“ it cannot be more than seven.”

But just then Mrs St Clair entered, and the

mother and the daughter exchanged their morning salutations. The former was going to the theatre, as it was one of her greatest enjoyments to patronise a large party of secondary people, by whom she was looked up to with that respect, which money and consequence will always procure from one set, if not from another. She expressed her astonishment at finding her daughter seated at her harp in her morning dress, and the Countess, hastily rising, said she was just going to commence her toilette—"But I dine with Lady Peverley, who is always late."

"And then what else?" asked Mrs St Clair.

"Then, I believe, I shall go to the opera with Lady Charles, and I shall, perhaps, just look in for half an hour at the Duchess of Arlington's."

"You are killing yourself, Gertrude—absolutely killing yourself—you look wretchedly—I must put a stop to this—we must leave this town."

"We shall talk of that to-morrow, mama—good-bye," cried the Countess, as she flew away to her dressing-room, anxious to avoid all unpleasant discussion.

She half expected to meet Colonel Delmour at

dinner, but she was mistaken. At all events, there could not be a doubt of seeing him at the opera, and to the opera she went with Lady Charles, escorted by two or three fashionable men. But Delmour was not there, and she watched the opening of every box, to see whether he would not yet enter. Her whole attention absorbed in this single point of observation, she neither saw nor heard anything else. She was merely conscious, that her companions were amused at something she knew not—cared not what; till at last Lady Charles touching her on the arm, said,—

“Do, Lady Rossville, take a little share of our diversion, bad as it is; that odd, little, nid-nodding face is too good to be kept all to ourselves; and ’tis so comical, all its nods and grimaces seem as if directed to our box.”

“It is very savage that none of us will return the compliment,” said Lord Ilfrington.

“It will be no sinecure,” said Mr Vavasour; “there must be a prodigious arrear, and still accumulating;” as a fresh succession of nods ensued.

“We must draw lots,” said Lord Ilfrington,

“ but Vavasour has the strongest head of the party.”

While this was going on, Lady Rossville had looked to the spot indicated, and there, in the centre of the pit, was to be seen a long small throat, with a pretty little, broad, smirking, delighted-looking face on the top of it, surmounted by a most elaborate pile of hair, dressed in all the possible varieties of style, combining Grecian braids, and Gothic bows, and Tuscan curls, which seemed to vibrate with renewed vigour, as the Countess looked in that direction.

“ Surely,” thought she, “ that is a face I have seen somewhere ;” but she still looked on it with a vacant eye, till at once it flashed upon her, that the face, and the head, and the nods, were all combined in the person of her cousin, Mrs Augustus Larkins !—As if to confirm the fact, Mr Augustus himself, a caricature of the reigning fashions, turned round and joined his bows to his Lilly’s nods. On first coming to town Gertrude had heard from Mrs St Clair that they were in the country, which had proved rather a relief ; and from that time to the present, no thought of Mr or Mrs Larkins had ever crossed her brain ;—

and now to be recognized by them in this public manner, where they were only conspicuous to be laughed at ! The Countess felt her very temples glow, and, with an exclamation at the heat of the house, she drew back, then rose and took a chair in the back of the box.

“ How mean, how silly I am ! ” thought she to herself, “ that *dare* not acknowledge my own relations, for fear of sharing in the pitiful ridicule of two or three people who are nothing to me !— O, I could beat myself for my folly !— Ah, Delmour knows me better than I know myself, and I have quarrelled with him because he does so,” and tears of mortification and disappointment rose to her eyes.—“ I will get the better of this paltry feeling,” said she to herself ; and again she returned to the front of the box, determined to acknowledge her cousin ; but the ballet was drawing near a close, and Mr and Mrs Larkins devoted their whole attention to it ;—then came the bustle and confusion of breaking up, and Gertrude began to think she should have her good resolutions for her pains, when again the good-humoured Lilly turned round her bright, joyous face, and Lady Rossville gave her a smile, and a bow

of recognition. But the next moment she felt her cheeks glow as she beheld the whole party, as if touched by electricity, face about simultaneously with looks of eager expectation. Again she turned away, and only breathed freely when she found herself in her carriage.

Delmour was not at the Duchess of Arlington's. Lady Charles expressed her astonishment at not finding him in any of his usual haunts, and Gertrude disclaimed all knowledge of his proceedings with as much indifference as she could assume.

"He is probably at the Duchess of St Ives," said Lady Stanley—"she has a musical party I believe to-night."

Again the Countess found the heat insupportable, and her easy good-humoured chaperon left the party with her as soon as her carriage could be got.

Gertrude returned home, wearied in body, and wretched in mind. All the worst qualities of her nature had been called forth and excited during the day—resentment, envy, pride, jealousy, had all been felt, and some of their leaven still wrought in her breast. "Oh, how I hate myself, and how hideous I look!" thought she, as she glanced at

herself in a mirror.—“Is this pleasure? Ah, how different from the sweet serene days I passed at Rossville!—but there I was not the vain, foolish, fantastic thing I am here. Lyndsay was right, when he told me I should never find my happiness in what the world calls pleasure!”—and the admired and envied Lady Rossville owned for the time, that to be admired, was but vanity—and to be envied, but vexation of spirit.

CHAPTER XIII

Perish those who have said our good things before us !

DONATUS.

BUT a sound sleep and a bright sun have wonderful effects in dispelling solemn thoughts, and the following morning found Gertrude's mind again gay with ideas of happiness, and her beauty restored to all its native freshness. She tried to think how she ought to receive Delmour ; but she never could study a part, she must always be swayed by circumstances, or by impulses, and to these she committed herself.

“ Perhaps I shall find him already below,” thought she, and, in that half-formed expectation, she hastened to breakfast. “ There may be some mistake,” was the next idea that occurred ; “ those people are all so stupid !” and she rang the bell. — “ I am at home to everybody this morning.”

“ Everybody, my Lady ?”

“ Yes, everybody.”

She dawdled over her breakfast, again murmured at the rapidity of her time-piece, while in her heart she felt the slowness of time itself. Amongst her letters was one from Anne Black to the same effect as Lyndsay's.

“ I am quite resolved,” said she, as she read it, “ that William Leslie shall have that church—all I will concede is, that I shall first convince Delmour of the propriety of it. To be sure, I may answer Lyndsay's letter now ;” and she took up a pen ; “ but I think I began one yesterday, which I left in my dressing-room ; I may as well finish it as begin another.” The entrance of Mrs St Clair added another to the many excuses for procrastination.

That lady had by some means discovered that a misunderstanding had taken place between the Countess and Colonel Delmour, though she was ignorant of the cause of it, and she deemed it more politic to take no notice of it, that she might not be suspected of any sinister design in wishing to get her daughter out of London. But, before she had an opportunity of beginning an oration on the subject, Lady Rossville held out her cousin's letter to her, saying,—

“ By-the-bye, mama, do you know Mr Bauld,

the minister of Rossville, is dead, and I mean to bestow the church upon William Leslie?—Here is a letter from Anne upon the subject.”

Mrs St Clair looked very solemn. “ You forget you have guardians to consult upon these occasions, Gertrude.”

“ I had a letter from Edward yesterday ; he is very anxious for it, and Anne says her father will not object to it. Lord Millbank, you know, is a mere name, and of course you must approve of it, mama.”

“ No—I do not approve of your being instrumental to the degrading of your uncle’s daughter into the wife of your parish minister.—If she will throw herself away, let it be in some remote situation ; but don’t let her bring her poverty and contempt to our very door.”

“ She may be poor, but I am sure she never can be despised, mama.”

“ Poverty and contempt generally go hand in hand in this world,” said Mrs St Clair. “ She cannot possibly afford to dress herself even upon an occasion, so as to be fit to appear at your table as your cousin, though merely as the minister’s wife she might pass without observation.”

“ She is so gentle and lady-like in her manners,

and so unassuming in her dress, that I am sure I never could be ashamed of either."

"Then she can scarcely afford hats and shoes, certainly not stockings and gloves, to her children, and you would enjoy very much, every time you went outside your gate, to be followed by a troop of half-naked urchins staring after their fine lady cousin."

"But, mama, I promised——"

"But at present you have no right to perform ; you are a minor, you are under pupillage ; it is your guardians you must be guided by ; wait till you are of age, and then do as you think proper ; by that time a much better living may be in your gift, for this, I understand, is one of the poorest."

The discussion was stopped, for just then there drew up an equipage, somewhat of a different style from those which usually graced the Countess's door. It was a very large, heavy, roomy-looking coach, evidently built to carry six, of a strong salmon colour, with grass-green hammer-cloth, and green and orange liveries. The general effect was shocking to the eye of taste, and Gertrude uttered an exclamation of horror as she caught a glance of it. It appeared to be literally as full as it could hold, as sundry bonnets were to be seen, and it was some mi-

minutes before Mr Larkins could extricate himself from the company within, and several more elapsed before Mrs Larkins emerged: Then followed another lady, and another, in less time; and all four were actually in the hall before Lady Rosville had presence of mind to take any precautions against this irruption.

Mr and Mrs Augustus Larkins, Miss Larkins, Miss Barbara Larkins, were now announced, and much bowing and curtseying, and introducing took place, and the good-natured, simple Lilly, seemed as though she never would weary of shaking hands, and expressing her delight at sight of her aunt and cousin. At length they were all seated, and then apologies commenced for not having been to wait upon them sooner.

“You must have thought it very unkind,” said she; “but we have been staying at old Mr Larkins’s beautiful villa, Willow Bank, and we only come back to town the day before yesterday. And how odd it was that we should see each other first at the opera! I saw you didn’t know me at first; but Augustus said, he daresaid you were angry because I had not been to wait upon you; but, I assure you, it was only the day be-

fore yesterday we came to town, and yesterday we couldn't get old Mr Larkins's coach, for he wanted it himself, but we have got it to-day, and old Mrs Larkins came with us, but she has hurt her leg, and finds it very troublesome to get out, so she hopes you'll excuse her."

"Chawming owse this, Mem," observed Mr Augustus, surveying the apartment all round.

"Monsous nice owse, indeed," said Miss Larkins.

"Sweet purty owse it is," said Miss Barbara Larkins.

"Well, Mem, you have been to our theatres of course?" inquired Mr Augustus.

Lady Rossville answered in the negative.

"Good la, Mem, it an't possible!—Why, then, you have seen nothing!—S'pose we make a party for Drury Lane some of these nights?"

A thundering rap at the door here proclaimed other visitors, and Gertrude thought she would have swooned when the Duchess of St Ives was announced. She rose to receive her in the other drawing-room;—but she was too late—the Duchess was already in the very heart of the Larkinses.

“How do you do, dear Lady Rossville? I heard you were taken ill at the Duchess of Arlington’s last night, and I felt quite anxious about you; but you seem pretty well to-day?”

This was uttered in that tone of insolent, condescending superiority, which is intended at once to convey an impression of the speaker’s own triumphant happiness, and their commiseration for the person they are addressing. Gertrude tried to repel it, but she was no adept in dissimulation, and her attempt at gaiety failed when she answered, that she had merely been fatigued by the length of the ballet at the Opera, and overcome by the excessive heat of the Duchess’s rooms.

“I judged wisely, then, it seems,” said the Duchess, carelessly, “in having my own little quiet party at home, though, to own the truth, I believe I was rather wise by compulsion, as I had two or three friends dining with me, who positively would not go away, and I was forced to sing to them till I actually made myself hoarse,” giving a little affected cough as she spoke.

Gertrude’s colour rose, and her heart beat, but she made no reply. Mrs St Clair, therefore,

thought it necessary to say something, if only to prevent the Larkinses from getting in a word.

“Your Grace’s musical powers, it seems, have greater attractions than even the wonder of the day, the celebrated Catalani.”

“O, dear no,” said the Duchess, in a sort of careless, contemptuous manner, as if she disdained to be complimented;—“but ’tis pleasant to sing with those who understand one’s style of singing. There is only one person I know who can sing ‘*Felice chi vi mira*,’ that is, in the way I sing it.”

That was Colonel Delmour’s favourite song, and one Gertrude and he had often sung together; and she had heard him mention the Duchess of St Ives’s singing, as something fine in its way, though in a different style from hers. She felt that her agitation would betray her if she attempted to carry on the conversation, and she was glad even to turn to the Larkinses, who, attracted by the splendid binding of some books which lay upon one of the tables, had begun to inspect, or rather to handle them.

“This is beautiful,” said Mrs Larkins, displaying some fine engravings in one of them to her

sisters-in-law ;—" I never saw this before—" Fisk, by Mrs Tigg,"—reading the title of it.

" Peseechye, my dear," whispered Mr Larkins, as if a little ashamed of her mal-pronunciation.

" Dear ! is that Fishie ?" said Miss Larkins ;—" a sweet, purty thing it is."

Gertrude could almost have cried at this Malaprop murder of " Psyche, by Mrs Tighe," while the Duchess had recourse to her little affected cough, to conceal the play of her muscles.

" Apropos of music, which we were talking of," said she, " pray, is not Colonel Delmour some relation of yours ? I think he told me you were somehow cousins. How very well he sings '*Felice chi vi mira !*' "

" Yes, I believe Colonel Delmour is my cousin," said Lady Rossville, now wrought up to an air of haughty indifference, " and he does sing some things very well, in particular, '*Vorrei che almen per gioco.*' "

" Ah, that, I suppose, he keeps for his particular favourites," said the Duchess with an insolent smile—" as he has never sung it to me. I shall certainly reproach him with his treachery when I see him. Meanwhile, good morning, dear Lady

Rossville ; I am quite happy to find you so well ;” and with a squeeze of the hand to the Countess, a slight bow to Mrs St Clair, and a supercilious stare at the Larkinses, as they all rose and bowed, and curtsied, with profound respect, she swept out of the room. Gertrude was much too wretched to know or care what passed during the remainder of the visit. She heard something said about a dinner, and about a party to the play, and about old Mr Larkins’s villa, and old Mrs Larkins’s leg, and in the inanity of despair, she assented to everything, and they at length took leave, impatient to carry the tidings of all they had seen and heard to their less noble acquaintances.

CHAPTER XIV.

My truant heart
Forgets each lesson that resentment taught,
And in thy sight knows only to be happy.

MASON'S *Elfrida*.

LIKE all those who are the slaves of their feelings, Lady Rossville found she must fly to one extreme or other—she must either shut herself up in her chamber, and refuse to be comforted, or she must plunge still deeper into the whirlpool of folly and extravagance to drown thought. As persons in a similar state of mind generally do, she chose both evils—she first wept the bitter tears of jealousy and mortification, then ordered her carriage, and, throwing on a veil, drove away to Lady Charles Arabin, to get her assistance in choosing some dresses and jewels.

“ I may as well order the furniture I want for Rossville too,” said she to herself—“ I shall be

there very soon now ;” and the tears again sprung to her eyes, as Rossville and all its tender recollections rose to her mind ; but she strove to put them down with the splendid plans she tried to busy her imagination about.

On being ushered into Lady Charles’s drawing-room, she found her surrounded by gentlemen, children, and dogs, and the bustle of her first entrance prevented her all at once from recognizing Colonel Delmour amongst the number, and when she did, a mutual bow was the only acknowledgment.

One by one the idlers dropped off, the children were sent to dinner, and only Lady Charles and her two friends remained. Gertrude then made her request, to which she acceded, adding—

“ Though, as I have got a little cold to-day, and your carriage is open, I must wrap up—so, pray, don’t tire to death, if I should be ten minutes at my toilette ;” and, with a smile, she disappeared.

Silence ensued. Gertrude carefully avoided looking in the direction where Delmour was, lest he should construe it into an appeal to him—and she almost feared to breathe, lest he should ima-

gine she had spoken. She flattered herself she was the very emblem of indifference and abstraction—but even through the folds of her veil, Delmour marked, with secret triumph, her quivering lip and tearful eyes. At length this state became too painful to be endured. She rose with the intention of passing into the adjoining drawing-room, when Delmour, approaching her with an air of agitation, said—

“ Although I should not have presumed to seek an interview with Lady Rossville in her own house again, after having been once turned from it, yet I cannot allow the present opportunity to pass without making an attempt to obtain from her justice what I have now little hope of owing to her tenderness.” He stopped in emotion—but Gertrude felt her tears ready to spring forth, and made no reply. “ All I ask is, that you would hear what I have to offer in excuse for my conduct, rash and unwarrantable as it must appear to you, until, in some degree, explained.”

“ I was wrong,” said Lady Rossville, summoning all her pride to her aid ; “ the step you had taken was one of so extraordinary a nature, that I

certainly ought to have heard what you had to offer in vindication of it."

This was a more prompt and spirited reply than Colonel Delmour had reckoned upon, and, for a moment or two, he was silent and disconcerted—he then said—

"I find I have mistaken your character, or rather I have judged it by my own. Had I been master of the universe, my pride, my happiness would have been, that the object of my love should, from the moment I loved, be the partner also of my power, be it what it might; but your sentiments are different from mine, it seems."

"I too should have had a pleasure in sharing the gifts of fortune, whatever they were," said the Countess; "but to have them wrested from me!——"

"But I never sought to wrest them from you," said Delmour with earnestness; "though, being rather rough and blunt in speech, I perhaps did not go so wooingly to work as some one more designing would have done. I told you, too briefly perhaps, the simple truth, that, at your wish, I had used every means to get myself ex-

changed into the Guards ; but it was a matter of difficulty, and —— why should I scruple to own it ? of expence, too, beyond my means ; but this I was too proud to own to you, and I have been punished for it—in short, not to bore you with tiresome business detail, Monteith proposed that I should engage to—to use my influence with you to provide for this old tutor of his, who is a sort of dead weight upon the family, and I, in the belief that I was—pardon my presumption—gratifying you, foolishly enough pledged myself to that effect.”

“ Nay, more—that you would obtain it,” said Lady Rossville, still struggling against betraying her tenderness.

“ Perhaps I did, in the sanguine hope, that, when the time came for fulfilling my promise, I should then have acquired greater influence with you than I can flatter myself I now possess. But that hope is at an end. However disgraceful it may be to fail in my promise, disgrace itself could scarce be more intolerable than the misery I have endured under your displeasure.”

“ And yet you could sing with the Duchess of St Ives ?” said Gertrude, reproachfully, while her

cheek flushed, and the tear swelled to the very brim.

“ Did I ? It may be so, for I can scarcely tell what I have done for the last four-and-twenty hours.—Yes, now I recollect Lord Westerton forcing me to her house, and being compelled to sing with her something or other—I forget what—that I used, I believe, to sing with her before the flood—that is, when I rather admired her bravura style of beauty and of singing ; but these days are past—never to return.”

Gertrude’s tears, hitherto with difficulty restrained, now dropped from her eyes ; but they were tears of joy and tenderness. “ Ah Delmour !” said she, as she gave him her hand, “ we have both been to blame ;—you have been rash, and I hasty ;—but you shall keep your promise.”—She rose, and placed herself at a writing-table. “ What is the name of the person you wish to befriend ?” asked she, as she began to write ; but she sighed as the name of William Leslie presented itself to her mind’s eye. Colonel Delmour could not tell the name ; but she wrote a few lines, engaging to bestow the church and living of Ross-ville upon ————, then presented the

paper to her lover, who, with affected generosity, for some time refused to receive it ; but at length the Countess prevailed, and he consented to keep his promise at the expence of hers.

Still Gertrude did not feel happy ; but the usual panacea was applied, viz. squandering money in dissipating thought. Colonel Delmour was of the shopping party, and encouraged her in every expensive whim. The most magnificent orders were given for furnishing Rossville with all possible expedition ; and, to crown her transient delusive pleasure, when they met the Duchess of St Ives, Delmour's only salutation to her was a distant bow.

“ Do you go to her assembly to-night ? ” inquired the Countess of her lover.

“ Not unless to accompany you.”

“ Then, pray, don't, dear Lady Rossville,” said Lady Charles, who was of the opposite faction to the Duchess. “ Do, both of you, come and dine quietly with Arabin and me. My cold is really too bad to admit of my going out in an evening ; and, you know, we never give dinners, so we shall be a party *quarré*—no bad thing, sometimes.”

Gertrude consented, and the quiet evening was passed partly in arranging a ball to be given by her, and partly in losing fifty guineas to Lord Charles at *écarté*.

“What an odd jumble of a day this has been!” thought she, as she laid her head on her pillow; “and yet I have had a great deal of pleasure in it too;” but she sighed as she said it—for not all the delusions of her own heart, or the blandishments of her lover, could stifle the voice of conscience, or conceal from her that she had acted unjustly and unwisely.

“What shall I say to Lyndsay?” was the first thought that presented itself the following morning; but, by the time she was dressed, she heard Delmour’s well-known knock.—“I fear I shall not have leisure to write to him to-day,” said she, as she hastened to receive her lover, glad of the excuse for delaying the irksome task. Then came the “strenuous idleness” of the day, most unremittingly persevered in for many successive days, till at length it became too late to think of writing at all.—It would be better now to wait till she returned to Rossville, she could explain the matter so much better in person than she

could do by letter. Alas ! she took not into account (how few of the great and the gay do !) the thought of that “hope deferred,” which “maketh the heart sick,” and which was experienced in all its intensity, as post after post arrived, and brought no tidings for those whose happiness hung upon her word.

Anne wrote again, and a blush of shame and remorse stained Lady Rossville’s cheek, as she beheld her cousin’s hand-writing ; but she opened all her trifling billets, and read all her cards and newspapers, and pampered her dog, and made her bullfinch pipe to her, but still she could not find leisure to break the seal of her cousin’s letter ! Her mind was now averse to exert itself upon any thing that did not bring some semblance of pleasure along with it ; and it was not so much the want of leisure, as the utter inability to employ what she had to any useful purpose, that thus bereft her of all self-command, and power of action.

“The thought she takes is, how to take no thought ;”
an art in which she was every day becoming a greater adept.

She went, however, with her mother to return Mrs Larkins's visit, and found the romantic Lilly settled to her heart's content in a dull, vulgar, well-furnished house in the heart of the city, talking Cockney by way of English, and overflowing with rapture at her own blissful lot. She pressed most vehemently for her aunt and cousin to fix a day to dine with them—Augustus would be so disappointed if they did not do it, he was so anxious they should meet some near relations of his, Sir Christopher and Lady Huggins—he had been Lord Mayor once, and was a remarkably genteel, nice man, and Lady Huggins was such a nice woman!—but, indeed, Augustus was very petikler in his friends, and had no ideer of visiting vulgar people.—But if they would not fix it now, Augustus and she would call in Park Lane some day very soon, for she knew he would take no denial—he kept a gig, and could drive her there any day. At this threat, Lady Rossville promised to look over the list of her engagements when she returned home, and if she had a day disengaged before leaving town, she would dine with them.

“ O, cousin, you really must not think of go-

ing away without dining with us. I assure you, Augustus will never forgive you if you do, and you are a great favourite of his at present."

Mrs St Clair here engaged that a day should certainly be allotted for the purpose, and at length they were permitted to depart, with much lamentation that Augustus was from home, and repeated assurances of calling again some day soon.

In hopes of averting that evil, Gertrude, upon consulting her engagements, found a day disengaged, and it was settled accordingly that it should be given to the Larkinses. Mrs St Clair, indeed, rather anticipated pleasure from a party there. She was sure of being of consequence, and of making and of causing a fuss and a bustle, a thing she could by no manner of means effect in the higher circles, where she could not even shine in the reflected lustre of her daughter.

CHAPTER XV.

O, fair ladies, how plesing war this lyfe of yours, if it sould ever abyde, and then in the end, that we might pas to hevin with all this gay gear.

JOHN KNOX.

MEANWHILE the day of the ball arrived, and even in the greatest of great houses a ball causes more or less of confusion and commotion. Mrs St Clair had in vain remonstrated against it. Her remonstrances, indeed, were rather reproaches, as the cards had been issued before she had even been consulted, and the preparations, made upon the most splendid scale, had all been arranged by the Countess and Colonel Delmour, aided by some of their friends. They were to come early to assist her in receiving the company, and she was dressed, and her apartments lighted in due time. She walked through them with al-

most childish delight. All was light, and flowers, and perfume, and her own figure, radiant in beauty and pleasure, flashed upon her in all directions from the magnificent mirrors, as they gave back the brilliant scene in almost endless succession. She had stopped at one of them to alter something about her hair, when in the long vista she perceived a servant ushering in a gentleman, who she immediately concluded must be Delmour. She turned round to meet him with a smile, but, to her amazement, she beheld—not her lover, but her guardian, Lyndsay !

“ Mr Lyndsay ! my dear cousin ! ” exclaimed she ; but there was more of surprise than pleasure in the accent in which the words were uttered ; “ how—where have you dropped from—the moon ? ”

“ No, dear Gertrude,” said he, as he affectionately shook her hand ; “ you have given me a long journey, but not quite so long a one as that—I come from Scotland.”

“ From Scotland ! ” repeated Lady Rosville, in some confusion, as her conscience smote her at the sound ; “ and how long have you been in town ? ”

“ Only since the morning—that is, my morning, which, I suppose, is your day-break, for I called—such is my vulgarity !—about noon, and was told my lady was not up. I left my card, and called again at three, when I was told my lady had just gone out ; and here I am now, it seems, just in time for my lady’s ball.”

“ Will you, indeed, stay ?” cried Gertrude, rather at a loss to ascertain whether he were in jest or earnest ; “ that will add so much to my pleasure—that is, I—but, indeed, I never heard you had called, and I forgot to look over my cards this morning.”

“ Is that all you have forgot, Gertrude ?” inquired Lyndsay, in a somewhat reproachful tone.

“ I fear not,” said she, with a smile and a blush, but the one was forced, the other natural ; “ but this is not the time for me to remember all I have forgot.”

“ When is the time then, Gertrude ?”

“ O, any time, you know, that—that—any morning——”

“ Any morning sometimes means no day, does it not ?” said Lyndsay. “ But I have come far on purpose to see you, and to talk with you,

since you will not write to me, and I *must* know when you will be disengaged."

"Spoken like a guardian, indeed!" said the Countess, with an affected laugh; "but since you *must* know, I *must* candidly confess, that I really cannot, at this precise moment, recollect what my engagements are—T'o-morrow, I know I made a party to go to Richmond by water to breakfast. I wish to get out of the way of the *debris* of to-night."

"And what follows?"

"Why, we shall probably dine there, and return in the evening, when I have several engagements."

"And the day after to-morrow—can I see you then?"

"What day is that?—Friday. I rather think—yes, indeed, I remember now I engaged to give Tournereilli a sitting at a very early hour, and as I forgot once before, if I fail this time, he will certainly make a Gorgon or a Medusa of me. But you will join our party to Richmond to-morrow, and then we can talk it all over—pray do."

Lyndsay sighed. "Ah, Gertrude, what changed days since those we passed at Rossville toge-

ther ! I little thought then you would have grudged half an hour from your pleasures to bestow upon your friend !”

“ You surely would not have me break my engagements ?” said the Countess, with some pique.

“ On the contrary, it was to remind you of them that chiefly brought me here,” said Lyndsay mildly, but gravely ; “ but I would have you choose the lesser evil—that which will give least pain to others. Your gay friends will not break their hearts I dare say, although you should disappoint them to-morrow ; but there are others, Gertrude, with whom you have made engagements of more consequence, and whose happiness is in your hands—it is for them I would intercede.”

Lady Rossville coloured deeply, and rising, said, “ It will have rather a ridiculous effect for you and me to be found sitting here in grave debate, discussing our parish business in the ball-room—the place is, at least, as ill chosen as the time,” added she somewhat haughtily as she moved away. For a moment Lyndsay seemed too much hurt to reply, but recollecting himself, he said—

“ Upon my own account, I certainly would not intrude where I am evidently so unwelcome, but I have undertaken a task which I must perform ; I have engaged to remind Lady Rossville of her promise—and more, to get that promise fulfilled.”

The Countess remained silent, but her countenance betrayed the agitation of her mind. At that moment the knocker sounded an alarm.

“ You have refused to fix an hour to see me,” said Lyndsay ; “ I will therefore name one to wait upon you—to-morrow at one I will be here.”

Gertrude made no reply, but hurried forward to receive Lady Charles, Colonel Delmour, and a succession of friends, who now came pouring in.

Delmour’s astonishment at sight of Lyndsay could only be equalled by his dissatisfaction, and the meeting on both sides was cold and distant. Mrs St Clair now made her appearance, Lady Augusta and her daughters followed, and Lyndsay was soon overwhelmed with expressions of surprise and pleasure from all quarters, but he contrived to disengage himself from them, and disappeared.

“Lyndsay has been giving you a godly exhortation against the sinfulness of dancing, I suppose,” said Delmour, as he led Gertrude to open the ball; “and you look almost as grave as though you had the fear of the kirk-session before your eyes.”

Gertrude smiled, and the exhilarating effects of the music, and all the concomitants of a brilliant ball, soon dispelled the unpleasant thoughts which Lyndsay’s appearance had excited. All was enchantment—while it lasted—and the Countess believed she was happy.

But the morrow told another tale, when she awoke to the realities of life, and found the delusion had vanished, leaving only dust and rubbish to mark where it had been. It was near the hour when Lyndsay had said he was to call, but she had not promised to receive him. It was disagreeable to see anybody that morning—her head ached—her house was in confusion—her servants were all stupid with wine or sleep—nothing was as it ought to be; then two o’clock was the hour when she was to set off for Richmond, and she should be so hurried!—No, it was impossible—quite impossible—it was unreasonable to expect that she should

be able to enter on business all at once so wholly unprepared, and she resolved to send her excuse ; but just then her maid entered to say that Mr Lyndsay was below, but as he was in no hurry, begged her Ladyship might not be disturbed. There was no evading this, and, with a mixture of haste and delay, she prepared for the interview.

CHAPTER XVI.

You do imagine,
No doubt, you have talked wisely, and confuted
London past all defence.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

IF Lyndsay had parted in displeasure, as Gertrude thought he had done the night before, all traces of it had completely vanished. But there was a settled seriousness in his look and manner, which made her feel that levity would be misplaced, and if anything so graceful could have felt awkward, she would have done so. As it was, she was evidently embarrassed. She rung for her chocolate—caressed her dog—spoke to her bird—ordered away some flowers that were too powerful—desired her maid to fetch her some *eau de Coulogne*—and in short, seemed bent upon keeping up a bustle around her, as if to prevent the possibility of anything like settled

conversation. Lyndsay sat calmly waiting till all this should be over; and, at length, her orders having been all obeyed, she began to feel ashamed of such trifling, and allowed the servants to leave the room without any more frivolous commands.

“I think I am very good-natured—am I not?” said she, making an attempt to rally her spirits, as she sipped her chocolate, “to admit you this morning, considering how ill you used me last night in running away from my ball—and now to come thus behind the scene, only to see how ugly we look after all is over, is scarcely fair.”

“The spectre of pleasure is perhaps not more beautiful than other spectres,” said Lyndsay; “but I have something of a wizard’s eye in these matters, and last night’s scene, brilliant as it was, could not impose upon me.—I have learnt to distinguish real from artificial happiness.”

“But my happiness, I do assure you, was quite real while it lasted,” said Gertrude, gaily: “the only melancholy part of it was, that it did not last quite so long as one could have wished.”

“Is your happiness, then, of so evanescent a nature, Gertrude?” asked Lyndsay.

“How very literal you are become!” answered she, attempting to laugh;—“you seem to have forgot the way to jest.”

“Not when there is good occasion,” said Lyndsay, gravely; “but, at present, I confess, I am not in a jesting mood.”

“How unfortunate! for I am not in a serious one, so we shall never agree—unless, indeed, you agree to be of my party to Richmond. Come, you surely cannot refuse me that? However you might despise my ball as an artificial pleasure, you must, by the same rule, approve of my *fête champêtre* as a piece of real rural felicity. Now, don’t be so churlish as to refuse. Do consent to be gay and happy like other people.”

“Are you happy, Gertrude?” asked Lyndsay, still more gravely.

“To be sure—why should you doubt it?”

“Because I have always looked upon true happiness as a generous, diffusive sentiment, that sought to impart a portion of its own blessedness to all around. Such it was with you, Gertrude, at Rossville; but now you seem to confine it within narrower bounds—none of it finds its way there now!”

Gertrude blushed, while she attempted to smile, and said,—

“ I am keeping it all to carry there along with me. I mean to return to Rossville very soon now, and I intend that you should all be very happy to see me.”

“ Some, I trust, will have good cause,” said Lyndsay ; “ but, in the meantime, there are two young lovers who are suffering, not merely the tortures of suspense, but the aggravation of an evil report ; yet it seems so incredible a one, that I almost hesitate to repeat it, you will think us country folks so credulous.”

“ Pray let me hear it,” said the Countess faintly.

“ It is said that you have actually given away the living of Rossville, which you had promised to young Leslie, to a superannuated *bon vivant* hanger-on of the Monteiths.”

Lady Rossville’s colour mounted to her very temples, and at that moment a servant entered to say her Ladyship’s carriage was in waiting. She rose, and stammered out something about her engagement—her party, and she knew not what, as she was moving towards the door.

“ I too have an engagement to keep,” said Lyndsay, calmly, but very gravely, and he took her hand and led her to her seat; “ I have engaged to prove the falsity of that report from your own lips.”

But Lady Rossville remained silent, evidently struggling with her feelings.

“ Gertrude, you *could* not be so false to others, so unjust to yourself?” said Lyndsay, with emotion.

Shame, sorrow, and pride, all swelled in Lady Rossville’s heart almost to suffocation, but pride prevailed; and, even while her burning cheeks and downcast eyes betrayed her consciousness of wrong, she answered, with an air of haughty indignation,—

“ One part of the report you are certainly at liberty to contradict—I never promised the living of Rossville to Mr Leslie.”

“ You promised to provide for him when it should be in your power.”

“ And I will yet do so—but, in the present instance, it is not in my power; and now, Mr Lyndsay, excuse me if I must be gone.”

“ No, it is not thus we must part,” said Lynd-

say, in a tone so firm, yet so sad, as awed the Countess, even in spite of herself, and she remained passively waiting for what was to follow. "If we part thus, we may never meet again as we have done"—he stopped in some emotion, and then proceeded.—"Before I became your guardian I had learned to consider myself as your friend, and I had flattered myself the confidence you then honoured me with would have been continued, but it has not proved so; I appeal to yourself, Gertrude, has it?"

For a moment Gertrude could not answer, but at length she said—

"My sentiments remain unchanged, but surely you might know enough of a London life to make allowance for any omissions I may have been guilty of."

"I have—I do make allowance for them," said Lyndsay;—"I knew all the dangers that awaited one of your ardent, confiding, susceptible, but volatile nature—I knew that the adulation of the world would prove incense too intoxicating to be resisted by one who had not yet looked through the shallowness of earthly grandeur; I do not, therefore, reproach you with

your neglect, your unkindness, your almost boundless extravagance—these are faults that may yet be repaired—but broken promises and power misused—Ah ! Gertrude, what can make up for these ?”

Lady Rossville made a gesture of impatience, as if to conceal her agitation, then said—

“ I have already disclaimed the promise—the power is my own ; I did not imagine I was accountable for it to Mr Lyndsay.”

“ No, Gertrude, you are accountable to a higher tribunal, even to God himself, for the choice you make of his ministers. I am aware, that in the world the appointment of a clergyman is reckoned a slight thing, but I view it differently, and, as your guardian, I protest against the choice you have made.”

“ It is too late,” said Gertrude in a faltering voice.

“ No, it cannot be too late. You have been misled, betrayed into one engagement at the expence of another. If you will give me leave, I will yet extricate you from it.”

“ Impossible !” exclaimed the Countess, in an agitated tone, as she shrunk from the thoughts

of encountering Delmour's displeasure.—“ Why then tease me by prolonging this painful and needless discussion?—I will not, I cannot, retract what I have done.”

“ Ah ! Gertrude, do not suffer a false principle of honour thus to sway all your better feelings. If no higher motive can influence you in this, at least let me conjure you by the friendship of former days, by the affection you bear your cousin, who loves you so tenderly, she will not believe in the possibility of your deceiving her——”

“ Oh, Lyndsay, do not, do not torture me !” cried Gertrude, as she covered her face with her hand.

“ It is to save you from the torture of an upbraiding conscience, dear Gertrude, that I thus afflict you. The happiness of two amiable interesting beings is in your hands ; you are their only earthly stay at present ; should you fail them, their disappointment may be bitter, but the reproaches of your own heart will be bitterer still.”

Lady Rossville's heart heaved, and, in spite of her efforts to restrain them, tears burst from her eyes ; but at that moment she thought she

heard Delmour's knock ; she started up, and hastily brushed away the tear from her cheek :—
“ Let there be an end of this,” said she—“ I can hear no more.”

“ Yes,” said Lyndsay, seizing her hand to detain her, while his own shook with emotion—
“ you must hear yet more—you must hear me resign from henceforth the office of your guardian ; 'tis a mockery I can no longer endure.”

Lady Rossville made no reply. A thousand contending feelings struggled in her breast, but she repressed them all with that force which is the result of conscious weakness, and with the calmness of one determined to do wrong, she merely bent her head in acquiescence.

“ Should the time ever arrive when Lady Rossville, gay and prosperous as she now is, should want the aid or counsel of a friend,”—Lyndsay's voice faltered, but the Countess remained calm and motionless—“ Gertrude, will you remember me ?”—But Gertrude averted her face to hide the anguish that filled her heart.—“ At least, you will say ‘ Farewell’ to me ?”

“ Farewell,” said Gertrude, in an assumed tone of indifference, and without turning round.

Lyndsay dropped the hand he held in his, and in another instant was gone.

It was then Gertrude's long-repressed feelings burst forth in all their violence. "Unkind, unjust, ungrateful that I am!" exclaimed she to herself, as she wept in an agony of remorse.—"I have lost the best, the truest friend, and he thinks me—Oh, what a cold-hearted, unfeeling wretch must he think me!—how must I have behaved, when even Lyndsay, the mild, forgiving, disinterested Lyndsay, has renounced me!" But her sorrow and her self-reproaches were checked by the entrance of Delmour, who, after knocking, had stopped to speak to a friend who was passing, and while so engaged, Lyndsay had gone out. The cousins did not speak, but from the expression of his countenance, Delmour at once perceived he had no cause for jealousy.

But for the first time, the sight of her lover failed to bring pleasure to Gertrude, as she contrasted his gay triumphant mien with Lyndsay's mild, pleading look, and melancholy air, and when he accosted her with an exclamation of astonishment, she turned from him, as she thought, "It is he who has caused me to act thus!"

“ My dear Gertrude,” cried he—“ what is the meaning of all this? But I guess how it is—you have had a puritanical lecture from the very Reverend Edward Lyndsay, and I am not surprised you should weep at it, were it only from weariness.”

But Gertrude still leant her head dejectedly upon her hand, and only sighed in answer.

“ By Heaven!” cried Delmour, passionately,—“ he shall answer to me for every tear he has made you shed.”

“ Beware how you add to the sorrow you have already brought upon me, Delmour,” said Gertrude ;—“ I have forgiven much, and may forgive more, but I will *never* forgive insult or injury offered to Edward Lyndsay on my account.”

Haughty and overbearing as Delmour was, he saw that, on the present occasion, he was not likely to obtain the mastery, and he was piqued to find that it required all his skill and eloquence to prevail upon Lady Rossville to keep her engagement, and join the party to Richmond. At length he prevailed ; but she set out with a heavy heart. By degrees, however, the novelty and the gaiety of the scene—the beauty of the day—the

succession of lovely landscapes that met the eye as they glided along—the music—the company—all combined to charm the senses, and Lyndsay was forgotten !

CHAPTER XVII.

Something that's bitter will arise
Even amid our jollities.

LUCRETIVS.

Penso qual ne parti, qual vi ritorno.

METASTASIO.

THE London season was now drawing near a close, and Lady Rossville had run her full career of folly and extravagance. As bills came pouring in upon her from all quarters, she was startled at the magnitude of the sums she had expended, and for which she had now nothing to show but a parcel of gewgaws, which had ceased with their novelty to afford her any pleasure. She felt almost glad that Lyndsay was no longer her guardian, that he might not see the extent of her imprudence; for even Delmour was surprised when he heard how much she had spent in so short a time. As for Mrs St Clair, this discovery, joined to the disappointment of her other schemes, occasioned her a fit of the jaundice,

which put a stop to the Larkinses' dinner, and, as soon as she was able to travel, she was ordered to Cheltenham for the benefit of the waters.— There they accordingly repaired, but not before it had been arranged by the lovers, that Colonel Delmour should join them in a short time.

At first Gertrude was pleased with the combination of picturesque beauty and fashionable gaiety, which are so happily blended at this celebrated watering-place ; but a short time sufficed to dispel the illusion. The amusements wanted the life, splendour, and variety of the London parties, and the walks and rides were little resorted to ; the supreme bon-ton of the idlers being to drive or walk backwards and forwards for about the space of a quarter of a mile of dusty street, without intermission, for two or three hours, day after day, and week after week, and that with as much settled seriousness as though they were actually fulfilling the high destinies of immortal beings.

“ O, how can'st thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which nature to her votary yields !”

But in vain would the minstrel have attempted to sing the beaux and belles of Cheltenham off the

burning pavement, even while the dog-star raged, provided the libraries, and confectioners, and toy-shops, kept their places. What to them

“ The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields ;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even.”

But it was otherwise with Lady Rossville ; her taste was not yet so vitiated as to take pleasure in the vapid pastimes of a watering-place, which, however they may amuse and relax the minds of the sick and the studious, can only tend to enfeeble those of the healthy and the gay. She sighed as she thought of her own fair domain,—its woods and its waters—its flowers neglected and forsaken—herself a queen there, while here she was one of a motley throng, with nought to recompense her but stare, and heat, and dust, and pressure. To add to her weariness and chagrin, Delmour had been detained in London on some regimental business, and was not likely to join her before her return to Rossville.

Mrs St Clair’s aversion to Colonel Delmour had by no means diminished ; but she found her

opposition so perfectly vain, and her attempts to lead her daughter now so futile, that she had almost abandoned both ; though not without many severe struggles, and some dark mysterious threats, which, however, the Countess had now learnt to disregard.

At length they bade adieu to Cheltenham ; but summer was far advanced, or rather autumn had commenced, before they returned to Rossville. It was with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain that Gertrude beheld it again. Even while her heart bounded at sight of every well-known object, they seemed to reproach her with having lavished her thoughts, her affections, her money, upon worthless baubles, and heartless pleasures. Her conscience smote her as she passed some old cottages which she had planned pulling down, and building new and more commodious ones in their place. “ Half of what my opera-box cost me would have done that,” sighed she ; “ and that bridge !” as she caught a glimpse of one, half-finished ; “ the poor people must still go two miles round, till my diamond necklace is paid ;” and tears of contrition dropped from her eyes.

But it was not so at the Castle ; for Delmour’s

orders had superseded Lyndsay's schemes, and, however the poor might suffer, nothing had been left undone there. The conservatory and the garden had been completed, and stocked at an immense expence; the apartments were superbly and tastefully furnished; the theatre was almost finished, and again Gertrude's volatile heart throbbed with pride and pleasure, as she looked on this new creation of taste and fancy, and anticipated the joys yet to come. But, as the novelty abated, again the voice of conscience was heard, and the thoughts of Lyndsay recurred. She wondered whether he would come to visit her upon her return, and she both wished and dreaded the meeting; but day after day passed on, and Lyndsay came not. Her cousin, Anne, too, how could she behold her without shame and confusion of face! But her apprehensions on that score were partly relieved, by receiving the following note a few days after her arrival:—

“ MY DEAR LADY ROSSVILLE,

“ I AM very sure it will give you pleasure to hear that William has at length been provided for, as I know how much it must have pained

you to be unable to fulfil your kind intentions in his favour. But what you could not do yourself, your kind friend Mr Lyndsay has done for you. He has so generously interested himself in this affair, that he has got William appointed to the living of Whinbrae ; and Mr Turner, who was to have succeeded to that church, he has secured in a secular office of greater emolument, and better suited to his views and sentiments. The only obstacle to our union is therefore now removed ; and as we are to have immediate possession of the manse, it is to take place very soon—perhaps in the course of next week. It is to you, under Heaven, that we owe our happiness, by interesting so kind and generous a patron in our behalf. Accept, therefore, my dear Lady Rossville, the united thanks and prayers of

“ Your affectionate ANNE BLACK,
“ and obliged and grateful WILLIAM LESLIE.”

“ Kind and generous, indeed !” exclaimed Lady Rossville, as she read this billet, and a blush of shame burned on her cheek. “ He has saved me as far as he could from the disgrace of—at best, I fear, equivocation, and from the

wretchedness of having disappointed the hopes of those whom I had taught to put their trust in me."

In the overflowing of her heart she wrote to Anne, expressing her participation in her happiness, and giving the sole credit of it to Mr Lyndsay. She could not bring herself to tell her exactly how matters stood, but she assured her again and again, that it was to him, and to him only, they were indebted.

She thought she ought also to write to Lyndsay, to thank him for his kindness to her relations, and she took up the pen for that purpose, but she could not write anything to please herself; one style was too cold and formal for the warmth of her feelings; another too humble and penitential for her pride to stoop to, and Delmour might be displeased.—“No!” exclaimed she, as she threw down the pen, “I cannot write what I feel—I must either say too much or too little. It would be otherwise were we to meet; a few words would set all to rights, and how I wish he would afford me an opportunity of making my peace with him!—I cannot be happy while I think I have forfeited his good opinion.—Surely

he will come, and he will be pleased to find I have not forgot all his good lessons ;” and she tried to resume the studies and occupations she had begun at his suggestion ; but it would not do—the illusions of passion and the vanities of life still maintained their sway over her, and all was dull and joyless that did not administer to one or other. “ I shall never be good,” sighed she, “ according to Lyndsay’s notions, so ’tis in vain to try—perhaps Delmour would not like me so well if I were ;” and that argument was conclusive against all farther attempts of the kind.

Colonel Delmour’s absence had been protracted much beyond the period assigned, by the alarming illness of his brother, whose life at one time had been in imminent danger, from a pleuretic attack, the consequence, it was said, (as every thing of the kind must either have or be a consequence,) of cold caught at a late sitting of a committee, of which he was chairman. He was now better, and as soon as he was sufficiently recovered for his brother to leave him, the impatient lover was to set off for Rossville ; meanwhile, he implored Gertrude to write to him every day,

every hour, if possible, as the only alleviation to the tortures of separation. Such was Colonel Delmour's way of telling the story, and, as usual, it contained a portion of truth and falsehood. It was true that his brother had been dangerously ill while he was in London, but it was not true that he was still detained there from that cause. The fact was, he rather dreaded a dull family party at Rossville, for, lover as he was, he was too much a man of the world, too much accustomed to be amused, to be able to devote himself entirely to one object, however much beloved,—and Gertrude was as much beloved by him as anything could be ; but he felt himself now so secure in her affections, that there was not even the stimulants of jealousy or uncertainty to give a zest to their intercourse. In short, Colonel Delmour's heart and affections were so jaded and sophisticated, that simple feelings and simple pleasures had now become stale and insipid. He rather liked the country for two or three months in the autumn with a good party ; but to be constantly enacting the sentimental lover, and with no greater variety than Lady Betty and Mrs St Clair, or an interchange of neighbourly visits

with some agricultural lord or raw-boned squire—to be bored about county politics or county races—it was more than either his love or his philosophy could endure. At length his brother's convalescence left him no excuse, and he wrote to Gertrude that he would have set off instantly, but as the Arabins, Peverleys, and his friend Ilfrington, were preparing to storm Rossville, he had been prevailed upon to wait a day or two, and join the party. A postscript added, that they should probably go by the Lakes, as Lady Charles had taken a fancy for sketching, and Lord Charles wished to eat char.

Lady Rossville was deeply mortified at this letter. It contained even more than the usual quantity of love superlatives, was eloquent on the miseries of separation, and the anticipated happiness of their meeting; but still he did not fly to her—he could submit to wait on the movements of a capricious fine lady, and the taste of an indolent gourmand—and, for the first time, a doubt of the reality of his attachment struck upon her heart. The supposition was too dreadful to be endured, and she shrunk from it as she would have done

from the stroke of a dagger. “At least he does not love as I do!” thought she, as she tried to dispel the fast gathering tears, that, in spite of herself, rushed to her eyes; “but I was a fool to expect it. Who ever loved so fondly, so truly, as I have done?—and men never love with the devotion of women. But I would have Delmour different from every one else—I would be his all, as he is mine.” Then to wounded tenderness succeeded pride. He had besought her to write to him as usual, and mentioned the places where he should expect to find letters from her; but she determined to punish him by her silence, though the punishment would, in the first instance, fall upon herself, as the forbearance of not writing was, probably, at least equal to the disappointment of not receiving her letters.

Gertrude was naturally of an open, communicative temper, and the want of a confidante had often been severely felt by her; but she had never met with any one whom she thought perfectly suited to act even that subordinate part. Lady Charles was too much a woman of the world to enter into her enthusiastic notions, the Miss Del-

mours were too deep in flirtations themselves to be able to listen to anything of the kind at second-hand, and she had formed no other particular intimacy in London. Her cousin Anne might have done, for she was patient and attentive, but then she was so good, and so flat, and so matter-of-fact in her ideas on the subject, that it was in vain to expect any congeniality there. Hitherto she had contrived to exist without one, but now the want was felt, as sooner or later it must be, in all its loneliness. It would have been such a luxury to have complained of her lover to some considerate friend, who would have defended him, and proved to her that he was right, and she was wrong! Her mother was out of the question—she was the last person to whom she would have uttered a complaint of Delmour, whose name, by a sort of tacit agreement, was seldom mentioned between them. In this state of restless displeasure, it was a relief to have something to do, however disagreeable in itself; and she therefore acceded to Mrs St Clair's proposal that she should go and visit some of the members of her family, she herself being

confined with a cold. Lady Rossville then ordered her carriage, and set forth to try the effects of rapid driving and change of company in dispelling chagrin and ennui.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Fair seemly pleasance each to other makes,
With goodly purposes there as they sit.

Fairy Queen.

A name unmusical to Volscian ears,
And harsh in sound to thine.

SHAKESPEARE.

BELLEVUE was her first destination, for she could now endure to meet Anne, since she found her conduct was not viewed in the light she feared it would have been. She was welcomed by Mrs Black with even more than her wonted cordiality, and having dismissed the children, who were in the room with her, she immediately started the subject of Anne's marriage, prefacing her observations with a deep sigh, or rather groan—

“I'm sure we were all much obliged to you, my Lady, for refusing to give them your church. I was in great hopes that might have put an end to the thing altogether, and I really believe it would, if it had not been for Mr Lyndsay—Folk

are really ill employed sometimes when they think they're doing good, and it would maybe be just as well if there was less of that kind of interference in the world. As Mr Black says, ' Let ilka sheep hang by its ain shank ;' and it might have been long enough before William Leslie would have got a kirk, and in that time there's no saying what might have happened ; but now her father's just weary and sick of the subject, and he has given his consent,—and what could he do else?—so it will be all over soon now ;" and Mrs Black heaved another sigh.

" I trust they will both be very happy," said Gertrude.

" It may be so," said Mrs Black coldly ; " but it will be but a waiff kind of happiness—very different from her two sisters, who want for nothing, and both keep their own carriages—but I must always think her family are little obliged to Mr Lyndsay."

Anne's entrance put a stop to her mother's lamentations, and Gertrude was then strictly questioned as to all she had seen or heard of Mrs Larkins, who, Mrs Black seemed to think, must, from her own account, be a very distinguished

personage in London. Lady Rossville made no attempts to undeceive her, but gave as flattering a picture as she could of the Larkinses' prosperity.

Upon hearing that her cousin was going to walk to Barnford to visit her aunts, the Countess offered her a seat in her barouche, which she willingly accepted of. While Anne went to get ready, Mrs Black again returned to the charge, and again expressed her own and Mr Black's gratitude for the friendly part she had acted in refusing the kirk. "As for this marriage," said she, "I have no heart to make any ploy of it, so I shall ask nobody. The lads may come out to it if they like, but I'm very doubtful if the Major and his Lady will countenance it."

Gertrude was on the point of offering to attend, but just then Anne returned, and they set off. No sooner were they alone than Anne began to repeat her acknowledgments for what had been done. "Had it not been for Mr Lyndsay," said she, "I know not what would have become of us, for my mother had resolved upon sending me to London to live with my sister, in hopes that a change might have been

wrought in my sentiments; but it would have served no purpose but to render us both unhappy, for the love that is founded in religion and virtue cannot change.'

"No," said Gertrude; "I do not think the love could have been true that any circumstances could ever change."

"It is perhaps sometimes difficult to distinguish false from true," said Anne; "but I am sure whoever Mr Lyndsay loves he will love truly, and whoever loves him will love for ever and aye."

"He has made a warm advocate in you," said Lady Rossville smiling.

"Ah, he deserves much more than I can say of him! Had you but seen with what warmth and kindness he entered into our affairs, and how feelingly he sympathized in our disappointment, and how vexed he seemed upon your account too ——"

"Upon my account!" exclaimed Gertrude, while a glow of conscious shame suffused her cheek—"How—what could he say for me?"

"He did not say much; but when my father and mother argued from your having otherwise

disposed of the church, that you were opposed to our union, he disclaimed that idea altogether, and said, that although you had inadvertently made an engagement which you thought you could not break, yet he was sure you suffered more than any of us did, and he said it in a way that showed how much he felt for you."

"It is in sorrow then, and not in anger, that he thinks of me!" thought Gertrude, but there was something more humiliating in the one than the other. She could have made overtures to be reconciled, but she could not sue to be forgiven, and she sought to steel herself against the repentance that her cousin's recital had awakened in her breast.

As Anne was about to renew the grateful theme, the Countess abruptly changed the conversation, and as they were then in sight of uncle Adam's mansion, she proposed to pay him a visit, to which Anne timidly assented, not having had the courage to encounter him since her marriage had been made known to him.

They were received, as usual, in a very doubtful sort of way by Mr Ramsay. Gertrude's looks commonly softened his asperities, by recalling the

image of his Lizzie; and it was so long since he had seen her, that he would have almost hailed her appearance, had not the rumour of her engagement with Colonel Delmour reached his ears, and caused them to tingle to the very drum with indignation. She looked pale, and out of spirits too, and less like Lizzie than usual; so that he was ready to take the field against her, especially as he saw that she had got a new and more splendid equipage, and her dress was something he was not accustomed to see pass his windows every day.

“I canna say London has improved you,” said he, scarcely looking at her. “I dinna think I wad hae kent you if I had met you. If that’s a’ you have made by it, I think you would have been just as weel at hame.”

“Much better, I believe,” said Lady Rossville, with a sigh she did not intend. “London is not the place for either light heads or light purses like mine.”

Uncle Adam thought this savoured of an attack upon his hoards, and he resented it accordingly.—“Ay, light heads mak light purses, and

it's best they should keep company wi' ane anither."

Lady Rossville only smiled at this rebuff, then said, "Well, as you don't seem to make my light head and my light purse very welcome, here is a light heart that I hope will please you better," pointing to Anne, whose happy, blooming face, and little simply dressed figure, formed quite a contrast to the Countess's pale complexion, dissatisfied expression, and elegant, but fanciful style of dress.

"Oo ay, sweet hearts are aye light hearts; but maybe that's ower light a word for you and your dominie. I dinna ken what you religious folk ca' yoursel's. Hae ye ony godly name that you carry on your courtships wi'?"

Poor Anne blushed, as she answered, in some confusion, that her uncle might call her what he pleased.

"And if I should ca' you twa great fules?" demanded he.

"Perhaps you will only call us by our right names," said Anne, with a smile.

"There's some modesty at least in that," said uncle Adam more benignly; "but what did you

mean by carrying on this hiddlin' coortship o' yours sae lang? I never heard a word o't till I heard it frae your father last week."

"I thought it unnecessary to trouble you upon a subject which did not interest you," said Anne.

["How did you ken whether it would interesst me or no? I suppose if I had had a kirk in my aught, you wad hae thought it very interesstin'." Then as his attention was attracted to the carriage moving forward, "That's a fine ootset for a minister's wife, or else no, to be riding up and down the country in a phyeton and fower, and her twa flunkies!"—But at that moment the Waddell carriage took the place of the Rossville one, and Mrs Major herself appeared in all her pomp and bustle.—"This is very hard," muttered Mr Ramsay, as he turned to and fro, "that I canna ca' my hooss my ain."

But Mrs Major now entered in a very slow, solemn, interesting manner; and, as if much fatigued by the exertion of walking from her carriage to the house, she seated herself immediately on her entrance, and then held out her hand, first to uncle Adam, who would not take it, next

to Lady Rossville, with an affectionate shake, and, lastly, to Anne, whom she scarcely touched.

“ This is the second time I have been out,” said she, speaking in a languid, affected tone, and applying a smelling-bottle to her nose ; “ and I feel quite fatigued with the exertion of walking from the carriage here.”

“ I am sorry to hear you have been unwell,” said Lady Rossville ; “ nothing serious, I hope ?”

“ Good gracious, Lady Rossville !” exclaimed Mrs Waddell, roused into energy, “ have you forgot that I have been confined ?”

“ O—I—I beg pardon,” said Gertrude, as some confused notion darted across her brain of having heard of some such event when in London.

“ The Major announced it to Mrs St Clair, I know,” said the lady.

“ Yes—very true—I had forgot, but I——”

“ And you must have seen it in the papers—I know the Major sent it to all the papers.”

“ He had very little to do,” observed uncle Adam.

“ What paper do you get ?” demanded Mrs

Major, determined to dive to the bottom of this mystery.

“ I seldom read any but the Morning Post.”

“ And was it not there ?”

“ Perhaps—very likely—I dare say it was—but——”

“ You know, if it had been there, you must have seen it, and it wasn’t a thing to overlook. I must let the Major know that, and have it inquired into. I know he sent it to every one of the papers—I know that perfectly.”

Lady Rossville now thought she recollected Mrs St Clair mentioning an heir to the race of Waddells ; and, by way of atoning for her lapse, she said, “ I hope your little boy is quite well ?”

“ Boy !” exclaimed the still more exasperated lady ; “ it happens to be a girl ! and, I assure you, the Major and I were much better pleased—we were both very anxious for a girl—for, although, where there is a title in the family, it is natural to wish for a son, yet we both think it is of the greatest consequence the eldest should be a girl, so it was a great gratification to us—it was just what we wanted.”

“ Very true—I beg your pardon.”

But the outraged mother turned towards Mr Ramsay.—“ I am come, uncle, to make a request in the name of my little miss, who we must really think of having christened some of these days. As the Major is an Episcopalian, we will, of course, have it done according to that service ; and we hope you will kindly officiate as godfather upon the occasion.”

At this proposal uncle Adam looked “ black as night, fierce as ten furies ;” and he seemed on the point of uttering some awful anathema, when, suddenly checking himself, he said, in one of his alarmingly mild tones, “ I’ve nae great objections—provided I’m to hae the bairn called after me.”

Mrs Waddell was confounded. On the one hand, that was all but declaring the child his heir ; on the other, Adam Waddell was rather an uncouth appellation for a young lady. But then a moveable tail might be tacked to Adam ;—she might be Adam to him, and Adamine or Adamella, or Adamintha, to the rest of the world ; and Mrs Major inwardly chuckled at the proposal, though she resolved, at the same time, to enhance the value of the concession. She therefore said—

“ Why, to tell you the truth, uncle, I had fixed in my own mind to have our little miss called after the Major, although he declares she must be named after me ; but I think Andromache is such a beautiful name, and so off the common ——”

“ Andrew Mackaye’s a very gude name for her, to be sure,” said uncle Adam, gravely.

“ Good gracious, uncle ! such a way of pronouncing Andromache ! However, I shall give up all thoughts of that, since you are so anxious to have our missy named after you ——”

“ Weel,” said uncle Adam, with a savage smile—“ that’s a’ settled, for you’ll no object to a bit trifling addition to the name, for it’s rather short and pookit—isna’t ?”

“ Why, to tell the truth, I think it is, and an addition would certainly be an improvement—Adamintha, for instance.”

“ I like a name that has some meaning in’t, and the name that ye’re to ca’ your bairn after me maun be Adamant ; for I can tell baith you and her, that Adamant you’ll find me to the last generation o’ you.”

The natural man here broke out, and Adam was himself again.

“ Really, uncle, you have the oddest ways,” began the lady, affecting to laugh, in order to cover her confusion; “ so we shall say no more about it at present. I shall leave it to the Major and you to settle it, and,” addressing Lady Rossville, “ when it does take place, we hope, cousin, you will be one of the godmothers, and favour us with your company on the occasion—and, I flatter myself, your god-daughter will not discredit you. Dr Bambleton says, she is, without exception, the largest and finest child he ever beheld, and just her father’s picture.”

Lady Rossville bowed, then rose to take her leave, and motioned Anne to accompany her.

“ Bless me !” exclaimed Mrs Waddell, “ is it possible, Anne, that you are flaunting about in a fine open carriage? I had no idea you would have done anything so dissipated—what will the synod say to that?” in an affected whisper.

Anne was too meek to retort, but uncle Adam was always ready to take up the cudgels for the oppressed.

“ Are you no satisfied wi’ ha’in’ a chaise o’

your ain, but you maun envye your sister, puir thing ! a ride in other folks' ?”

“ Envy !” repeated Mrs Major, with a toss ; “ I’m sure I don’t know what I should envy her or any one else for. As for four horses, I could have them whenever I choose, but I greatly prefer a pair ; so what I have to envy I’m sure I don’t know”—with an affected laugh of contempt.

“ It’s a pity you should be at a loss for something to wrack your envye upon,” said uncle Adam, as he opened his little old bureau, and took out the identical L. 500 bill he had received from Lady Rossville, and which had lain there ever since : “ Hae, my dear,” to Anne, “ there’s something for you to begin the world wi’—see what it is.”

Anne looked at the bill, and was too much overwhelmed to be able to speak, but the glow that overspread her face, and the tears of joy that stood in her soft blue eyes, spoke volumes. Uncle Adam saw her vainly attempting to thank him, and patting her on the shoulder, said, “ You needna fash to say onything about it, so gang your ways—Hae you a pocket to pit it in ?” and he almost thrust her out at the door.

Mrs Waddell was now past speaking. She was to have waited for the Major, whom she had permitted to go to a meeting in the County Hall, but to wait was impossible. She instantly drove off, and called the Major away from his business to attend to her injuries, and consult whether it would not be possible to *cognosce* uncle Adam, and get the editor of the Morning Post put in the pillory.

So much time had been spent at Bellevue and uncle Adam's, that Lady Rossville found she had little to bestow upon her aunts. She had pleasure however in seeing them, and in seeing that in many things she had contributed to their enjoyments. Their rooms were filled with the choicest flowers and plants from Rossville. Some beautiful Scriptural engravings, which she had sent them, decorated their walls, and she had filled an empty space at one end of the room with a pretty book-case filled with well-chosen books. All these things her aunts were at pains to point out to her, and to tell her what pleasure her kind considerate gifts had afforded them. She pressed them to come to Rossville for a few days, while her mother and she were quite alone, for even Lady

Betty was absent on a visit; but aunt Mary was too much of an invalid to leave home, and her sister never quitted her; so, with many thanks, the kind offer was declined, and they parted still more favourably impressed with each other.

CHAPTER XIX.

This is the state of man ; in prosperous fortune
A shadow passing light, throws to the ground
Joy's baseless fabric : in adversity
Comes malice with a sponge moisten'd in gall,
And wipes each beauteous character away.

ESCHYLUS.

THE weather had now set in wet—every thing without was cheerless, within was dull,—and surrounded with all that wealth and luxury could furnish, Lady Rossville felt that neither could protect their possessors against weariness and satiety. Delmour had taught her to despise the society of the neighbourhood, and since her return she had kept rather aloof from any intercourse ; but she would now have been glad of any one to break the tedium of the maternal *tête-à-tête*. Her reading—her music—her drawing—her embroidery—were all tried, and all failed to interest or amuse—for her ardent but ill-regulated mind sought in every occupation, not the medicine to cure, but

the aliment to feed her distempered fancy. Delmour voluntarily absent from her, was the idea that haunted her day and night. To look at his picture—to shed tears over it—to begin letters of reproach only to be torn—to think of whether she ought ever to see him again—were the chief resources against the weariness of existence.

The third day of incessant rain was drawing to a close. The mother and daughter were together in the saloon, when the Countess rose and opened a window, for the fifth time within the last hour, to see whether the rain was not abating; but it fell thicker than ever—every thing was dripping, but there was not a breath of wind to relieve the surcharged trees of their moisture—no living thing was to be seen, except now and then a bird which shot silently past—not a sound was to be heard, except the sullen roar of the river, as it was urged along beyond its natural course.

Lady Rossville in despair was about to shut the window, when, dimly discernible through the mist and rain, she descried a carriage approaching.

“It is Delmour, after all,” thought she, with a throb of delight—“he has meant to take me by

surprise!" and all sadness and ennui fled at that idea.

"Mama—it is—he is—there is a carriage," cried she in all the flutter of joy, as a hack chaise-and-four, with one gentleman inside, wheeled rapidly round to the entrance, and was lost to sight.

In a second the door was thrown open—no name was announced; but, preceded by the groom of the chambers, there entered—Lewiston!

At sight of him, Gertrude stood immoveable, while Mrs St Clair uttering a shriek, clapped her hands before her eyes, as if to shut out the dreadful apparition. He only smiled at this salutation, and approaching the Countess, held out his hand to her with the freedom of an old acquaintance; but her cheeks glowed with indignation while she turned from him with an air of lofty disdain. He looked at her for a moment with an expression half menacing, half ironical, then turned to Mrs St Clair, who, trembling and convulsed, rested her head upon a table, as if not daring to look up.

"This intrusion is too much," said the Countess, as she moved towards the bell—but in

passing, her mother caught her gown with almost frantic energy, and without raising her head, exclaimed, in a low gasping tone,—“ Gertrude—Gertrude—have mercy upon me !” Then making a violent effort, she rose and tottered, rather than walked, a few steps towards Lewiston, and extending her hands, tried to welcome him ; but her face was ghastly, and the words died upon her lips.

“ Why, what is all this ?” said he in his usual tone of familiar assurance, as he took her hands in his—“ You look as though you had seen a ghost, my good lady, instead of an old friend—But don’t be afraid, I am not from the other world, only from the wrong side of this one, with my honest Trudge here,” patting a great sneaking lurcher, which stuck to him like a bur ;—and he laughed.

“ Pardon me,” said Mrs St Clair ; “ but the surprise—I believed you—I ——” But her lips seemed parched, and her tongue as though it clove to the roof of her mouth—she could not proceed.

“ It must be apparent to you, Sir,” said Lady Rossville, haughtily, while yet her heart trembled within her—“ that your presence was un-

looked for—is unwelcome,” added she, as, even while she spoke, he seated himself, and smiled saucily.

Her indignation got the better of her fear.

“ I know not who you are,” said she, again approaching the bell—“ and I receive no visitors who are unknown to me.”

Again Mrs St Clair caught her—“ Gertrude—dearest Gertrude, be quiet—all will be well.”

“ The Countess was going to order her servants to show me to the door, was she ?” demanded Lewiston in the same insulting tone of irony ; —“ but her Ladyship may spare herself the trouble—I have sent off the chaise—this will be my home for some time, will it not ?” to Mrs St Clair.

Lady Rossville disengaged herself from her mother, and rang the bell with violence.

“ Gertrude, will you destroy me ?” exclaimed Mrs St Clair, in a voice of agony that thrilled to her daughter’s heart, and made her pause. When the summons was answered, “ Nothing—nothing, Thompson,” cried Mrs St Clair eagerly to the servant, “ shut the door—that’s all.”

Gertrude’s face was in a glow with the emotions

that struggled in her breast. To be thus braved in her own house—her resentment mocked—her power, as it were, annihilated—her mother trembling before a menial, or, at least, one whom she herself only recognized as the husband of a menial—her brain felt as on fire, and she stood speechless from excess of agitation.

“ So you thought, I suppose, I had gone to Davy’s Locker ?” said Lewiston, addressing Mrs St Clair. “ I read the account of the shipwreck of the Dauntless—by-the-bye, it was in the same paper with the old gentleman’s death, for these things are sometimes a long while of reaching us on t’other side the Atlantic—so, when I saw how the land lay, thinks I, ’tis time I was off to pay my respects to the Countess. She hasn’t given me a very kind reception though. But wasn’t it a luckiness that I had changed my ship ? Some poor devil of a Jack Lapslie it was, I think, was in a hurry to be off, and I gave up my birth to him, and waited for the next, the Hebe—wasn’t I good-natured ? But I *am* very good-natured, and virtue, you know, is always its own reward—eh ?”

“ If such are your friends,” said Lady Rossville, addressing her mother, in a voice almost in-

articulate, “ this house is no longer a residence for me ;” and again ringing the bell, which was instantly answered, (probably from Mr Thompson having stationed himself outside the door,) she desired her carriage to be got ready immediately ; then rushing past the servant, she flew to her own apartment. There her exasperated spirit gave way to tears, and she wept in uncontrollable agony. In a few minutes she was followed by Mrs St Clair ; but, on her entrance, Gertrude turned away her head from her, as if determined to listen to nothing she could say.

“ Gertrude !” said her mother, in a deep and agitated voice ; but she made no answer.

“ Gertrude !” cried she again, as she would have taken her hand ; but the Countess withdrew it.

“ Gertrude !” repeated she, and she sank on her knees at her daughter’s feet.

Lady Rossville started up in horror ; but her mother clung to her gown.

“ Do not turn from me,” cried she wildly ;—
“ but tell me—can I do more to soften you ?—
On my knees I beg of you to have mercy upon me !”

“ Oh !” exclaimed Gertrude with a shudder, as she sought to raise her mother.

“ No—I have to beg for my life—for my fame—at your hands——”

“ This is too dreadful !” exclaimed the Countess.—“ If you would not drive me to distraction, rise.”

“ Will you then hear me ?”

“ I will—I will—anything but this.”

Mrs St Clair rose.—“ Gertrude, you may bring me yet lower than you have now seen me—you may bring me to my grave.—Oh that I were already there !” cried she, with a burst of tears.

“ Tell me—only tell me—the meaning of this horrid mystery,” said Gertrude, trying to speak calmly ;—“ tell me why that man dares to treat me as he does ?”

“ Oh do not—in mercy to yourself and me—do not ask me——”

Lady Rossville stood for some moments with her eyes bent upon the ground, while her colour gradually rose till her very brow was crimsoned ; then, in a voice of assumed calmness, which only

spoke repressed agony, she said, speaking slowly,—

“Am I the daughter of Thomas St Clair?” Then raising her clasped hands to her forehead, she pressed them upon it, as if to still the throbbings of her brain.

Mrs St Clair looked upon her with a wild and ghastly stare—her very lips turned white, and she seemed as if bereft of all power of reply; but by a sudden revulsion, the blood flew to her face, and she said in a tone of bitterness—

“Even this humiliation I will endure—as I hope to be saved, I was ever a true and faithful wife—so judge me Heaven!” There was a fervour and solemnity in the appeal which carried conviction.

Lady Rossville uncovered her eyes, and fetched her breath, and a pause ensued, which, after some minutes, Mrs St Clair gathered courage to break—

“It is in vain that you would seek to penetrate the mysterious tie which links my fate with that of Lewiston, and which extends even to you—and it will be no less vain to attempt to free yourself from his power.—Hear me, Gertrude—hear me—you promised you would—If it were *possible*, if it were in human endeavour—can you, for a

moment, imagine that I would submit to what you have witnessed?" and tears of passion dropt from her eyes.

"Still less can I imagine any cause which can make you submit to it," said the Countess; "and it is impossible that *I* should—I will not—I cannot do it, be the consequences what they may."

At that moment her maid entered, to say her Ladyship's carriage was waiting, and while she spoke, the rain fell like a water-spout.

"That is enough—let it wait," said her mistress, who, in the tumult of her mind, forgot all feelings of humanity for man or beast. The Abigail withdrew, to agree with Mr Thompson that something strange was certainly going on, but what, they could not divine—the gentleman in the saloon had ordered up some luncheon for himself, and was eating and drinking to his heart's content, while the ladies were above stairs all in tears. " 'Twas strange, 'twas passing strange!"

No sooner was this interruption over, than Mrs St Clair exclaimed, "Go—go then—but I will also go—not in my carriage, attended as you are, but even as I am, on foot, and alone, with-

out even a cloak to cover me.—It is no idle threat—I here solemnly swear, that if you this day leave your house, I, too, leave it—never to return !”

It required no very high feelings of filial duty to turn with horror from such an alternative—aggravated as it was by every circumstance which could give effect to the picture—her mother but lately recovered from a severe illness, and yet far from well—driven from her daughter’s house—exposed to the inclemency of the weather—it was too dreadful to be dwelt upon.—Lady Rossville felt as though her senses would forsake her, and she said, in a vacant dejected manner, “ Do what you will.”—Mrs St Clair seized her daughter’s hands, and pressed them repeatedly to her lips, calling her at the same time by every endearing epithet ; but Gertrude sat in passive endurance, and as if scarcely conscious of the caresses lavished upon her. Her mother then rung for her maid to dismiss the carriage, and ordered her to bring some drops from her dressing-room for the Countess, who had been overcome, she said, at sight of an old friend of her father’s ; and having

both administered and partaken of them, she saw her laid upon a couch to rest, and leaving her in charge of Masham, she returned to the saloon to her guest.

CHAPTER XX.

But that shall gall thee most,
Will be the worthless and vile company
With whom thou must be thrown into these straits.

DANTE.

O doux momens d'horreur empoisonnés !

ALZIRE.

THE hour of dinner came, and when Mrs St Clair returned to her daughter's dressing-room, she found her as she had left her, extended upon a couch, and deaf to all Miss Masham's hints of dressing. Mrs St Clair dismissed the maid, and then, in a soothing voice, said, " Gertrude, my dearest—you will come to dinner.—I have had a long conversation with Lewiston—he has promised not to offend you with the bluntness of his American manners ; but you ought to make allowance for them—he is an independent citizen of a republican state, where all, you know, is liberty and equality—but he means no offence, and will endeavour to adapt himself more to our

notions of propriety while he remains, which I expect will be for a very short time."

"While he remains, I shall keep my own apartment," said Gertrude, without raising her head.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mrs St Clair in agitation, "he will never consent—that is—I cannot consent—dearest Gertrude, if you would not have me on my knees again, rise and come with me."

Lady Rossville sighed heavily, and rose.

"You will suffer Masham, my love, to dress you——"

"No—I will not be dressed to-day," said the Countess in an absolute manner.

"At least, you will have your hair arranged a little, my love?"

"I will go as I am," said Lady Rossville, in the same self-willed tone, "or not at all."

Mrs St Clair saw it would not do to contend; she gave up the point, and, accompanied by her daughter, descended to the dining-room.

Lady Rossville's appearance certainly was not in unison with the pomp, and order, and high-keeping of everything that surrounded her; her

dress was deranged—her hair was dishevelled—the cheek on which she had rested was of a crimson hue, while the other was of a deadly pale ; and though she passed on with an even loftier air than usual, it was without once lifting her eyes from the ground.

“ I hope your Ladyship feels recruited,” said Lewiston, as she took her place at table. He evidently meant to be polite, but there was something in the tone that grated on her ear—She started at the sound of his voice, and a faint flush overspread her whole face, as she slightly bent her head in reply—

“ I found the Countess fast asleep when I went to her,” said Mrs St Clair, quickly, as if answering for her daughter ; “ but she has not slept away that vile headach, it seems ; however, we are such a little quiet party, that I persuaded her to appear—We shall not expect you to talk, my love, but do eat something—the soup is very good—I think Brumeau has even surpassed himself to-day.”

“ You keep a French cook ?” demanded Lewiston ; “ that’s a confounded expence, is it not ?”

“ Not for Lady Rossville,” said Mrs St Clair

with a blush at the vulgarity of her friend, as she saw a sneer on the faces even of the well-bred gentlemen of the second table.

“ Ah, but there are better ways and worse of spending money ; however, another plateful of it if you please my Lady—you may give me two spoonfuls—there—that’s it—now, will you do me the favour to drink a glass of wine ?”

“ The Countess is so poor a wine-drinker,” again interposed Mrs St Clair, “ that you had better accept of me as her substitute.”

“ Come—we shall all drink together—come, my Lady, take a glass to drive away the blue devils this bad day.”

Gertrude’s agony was scarcely endurable ; but she still sat immoveable, with her eyes bent upon her plate, though without even attempting to taste what Mrs St Clair had put upon it.

“ What have we got here ?” said Lewiston, as he uncovered one of the dishes, and looked at it as at something he had never seen before.

“ *Blanquette de poularde*, Sir,” said the maître d’hotel.

“ Blankete day pollard !” repeated he ; “ shall

I help your Ladyship to some of them?—come, let me persuade you.”

Gertrude, with difficulty, made out a “No—thank you;” but Mrs St Clair was ready, as usual, to atone for her deficiencies.

“You seldom eat, I think, my love, till the second course. I hope there is something coming that you like. What was it you liked so much t’other day—do you remember?”

“I don’t know,” said the Countess, with a sigh, and an absent look.

“Jourdain, you ought to observe what Lady Rossville likes—How stupid, that I can’t think what it was you said was so good—Was it *perdreau sauté au truffes*?”

“Perhaps—I can’t tell,” said Lady Rossville, with an air that showed she was rather oppressed than gratified with this show of attention.

Meanwhile, Lewiston was eating and drinking with all the ardour of a hungry man, and the manners of a vulgar one.—He tasted of everything, evidently from curiosity; and, though it was apparent that the style was something he had not been accustomed to, yet he maintained

the same forward ease, as though he were quite at home.

“ Well, that may do for once,” said he, after having finished ; “ but, in America, we should scarcely call this a dinner—eh, Trudge ?” to his dog. “ Why, another such as myself would have looked silly here—I like to see a good joint or two.”

Mrs St Clair tried to laugh, but she coloured again, as she said—“ Lady Rossville and I make such poor figures by ourselves, at any thing of a substantial repast, that our dinners have, indeed, dwindled away into very fairy-like entertainments ; but, Jourdain, you will remember to let us have something more solid to-morrow.”

“ What do you think, for instance, of a fine, jolly, juicy, thirty pound round of well corned beef and parsnips ; or a handsome leg of pork and pease-pudding, and a couple of fat geese well stuffed with sage and onions, swimming in apple-sauce ?—Ah ! these are the dishes for me !” and he rubbed his hands with horrid glee.

It was a relief when dinner was over, and the servants had withdrawn ; for although the degradation was not lessened, at least there was no one

to witness it, unless it were the portraits of the Rossville family, as they frowned from their frames on the rude plebeian who seemed thus to have usurped their place. Gertrude had wrought herself up to a pitch of forbearance which it required all her powers of mind to maintain—a thousand times she was on the point of giving way to her feelings and ending this hateful scene; but as she caught her mother's eye fixed on her with a look of imploring agony she checked herself—“No,” thought she, “I will bear all for this night; but worlds shall not tempt me to submit to such another;” and she sat in a sort of marble endurance, while yet every nerve and fibre were stretched as upon a rack. Like all vulgar people Lewiston told so many good stories of and about himself, and talked so very loud, and laughed so very heartily, reason or none, that he completely deadened every other sound. A slight commotion in the hall, caused by an arrival, had not therefore been heard by any of the party; when suddenly a servant entered, and approaching the Countess said, “Colonel Delmour, your Ladyship;” and scarcely had he spoken, when Delmour himself advanced with eager step. Ger-

trude rose to welcome him with a rush of delight, which, for the moment, absorbed every other consideration. But the first rapturous emotion over, it was instantly succeeded by the painful consciousness of the strange and unaccountable situation in which he found her.

“ Mr Lewiston, Colonel Delmour,” said Mrs St Clair, in almost breathless agitation ; “ a friend of the family,” added she, as she marked the haughty condescending bow with which Delmour acknowledged the introduction. But before Lewiston had opened his lips, his assumed overdone air of nonchalance—his vulgar but confident deportment—the very cut of his clothes—all at a single glance betrayed to Colonel Delmour’s practised eye and refined tact, that this friend of the family was no gentleman. There was something so commanding in his own presence, such a decided air of superiority about him, that even the American, coarse and blunt as he was in feeling and perception, seemed for the moment overawed, or, at least, was silenced. Gertrude began to breathe as she thought her lover had come to deliver her from the hateful bondage in which she was held by this man and her mother, who were both, in the

jockey phrase, evidently *thrown out* by his arrival. It was not till he saw the Countess seated at table that Delmour was struck with her appearance, as contrasted with all around her ; she who was always so gay and splendid in her evening dress, was now in a morning *deshabille* ; her hair was beautiful even in disorder, but still it *was* in disorder, and although nothing could bereave her of her loveliness and her grace, yet she looked ill, and was embarrassed, and altogether unlike herself.

“ You have been ill, Gertrude,” said Delmour in a low voice, and speaking in Italian, while he gazed upon her with looks of the deepest interest.

“ No—nothing—only since the morning,” answered she.

“ And what has happened since the morning ?” inquired he, still speaking in the same language, while he turned a quick glance upon the stranger.

“ Of all those pictures,” said Lewiston, throwing himself back in his chair, and addressing Mrs St Clair in very bad French, as he pointed to the family portraits ; “ which do you reckon worth most money ?”

Mrs St Clair’s face crimsoned while she re-

plied, she was no judge of pictures, and Gertrude already wished Delmour had not come. She could not answer his question, but scarcely knowing what she said, she asked whether he had dined.

“ Yes—I was detained at Darleton for want of horses, and was obliged to have recourse to a greasy mutton-chop, and a bottle of bad port, by way of pastime—and after all, I could only get one wretched pair, who——”

“ I had the start of you there, Sir,” said the American, rudely interrupting him ; “ I had four horses from Darleton ;—by Jupiter ! how one does go with four horses !” and he chuckled and made a gesture as though he were driving.

This was too much—Lady Rossville started up, and forgetting all her mother’s cautions, said to Delmour, “ Since you have dined there is no occasion to remain here,” and taking his offered arm, with a haughty air, she led the way to the drawing-room, leaving Mrs St Clair and Lewiston confounded at her temerity ; but as they passed on, Mrs St Clair’s voice was heard in accents of entreaty to her guest.

“ In the name of Heaven, what does all this mean ?” said Colonel Delmour, when the Coun-

tess and he were alone. But pride, shame, indignation, checked Gertrude's utterance, and she could not answer.

"Something is wrong—tell me what it is—who is that man?"

Gertrude tried to repress her feelings while she answered—

"He is an American."

"That may be—but certainly not an American gentleman."

"He is an old acquaintance of my father's, it seems."

"Then you have seen him before?"

"Yes—but he only arrived to-day, and, I trust, will depart to-morrow; it is unfortunate that you should have come at the very time when we are encumbered with such a guest."

"You don't think I have come too soon, I hope?" said Delmour with a smile.

"Sooner certainly than I had reason to expect you," said Gertrude, roused to recollection of the slight put upon her by her lover, "considering what interesting pursuits you were engaged in."

Delmour coloured slightly, and in some confusion said—

“ So you really were taken in by my excuses, lame as they were ? The fact was, I was rather unwell at the time I wrote, and not caring to say so to you, I wrote—I forget what—something about making a fishing party with Arabin, was it not ? ”

“ No matter what it was,” cried Gertrude, “ since it was not so—though I would rather you had told me the truth at once.” But the fact was even so as he had first stated it ; but, whether he had taken the alarm at receiving no letter from the Countess, or that he had tired of his company, or that some sudden freak had seized him, he suddenly left his party, and set off by himself for Rossville, leaving them to follow at their own time. Gertrude’s heart felt lightened of half its load. Delmour loved her as much as ever, and he was there to protect her—what had she to fear ? and again her sanguine buoyant spirit danced in her heart, and sparkled in her eyes.

“ Well, you will endure this odious American for to-night,” said she, “ and to-morrow will surely rid us of him ; but he is so rude and overbearing in his manners, that I fear you will scarcely be able to tolerate him ; promise me,

then, that you won't notice him—I am so afraid of your quarrelling.”

“ Quarrelling !” repeated Delmour, with a smile of contempt ; “ no, I expect to be much amused with him—but as for quarrelling with such a person !——”

“ O ! he is not a person to be amused with,” said Gertrude, in alarm ; “ he is coarse and violent, and must not be provoked—Do not, for Heaven's sake, attempt to make game of him !”

“ What has brought such a person here ?”

“ I cannot tell—but promise me that you will, for this night, bear with him such as he is ?”

Delmour promised—but smiled, at the same time, at the importance she attached to so insignificant a being. Nothing more was said, for just then Mrs St Clair entered, with traces of agitation still visible on her countenance. Gertrude expected that her mother would have taken notice of her abrupt retreat from the dining-room, but she did not speak ; she seated herself with assumed calmness, and began stringing some pearls belonging to one of her bracelets—but her hand shook, and her thoughts were evidently otherwise employed. In a few minutes she rose and rang

the bell—when it was answered, “ Have you got the segars for Mr Lewiston ?” inquired she of the servant.

“ I do not know, Ma’am,” replied Mr Thompson, whose business it was to adjust chairs, not to furnish pipes, and who seemed to resent the question by the cold pomposity of his reply.

“ Inquire, then, and let me know immediately.”

“ So, in addition to his other agreeable qualities, Mr Lewiston is a smoker,” said Lady Rossville, provoked at this pollution of her beautiful apartment. But she was sorry she had said it ; for Mrs St Clair only answered with a sigh, so profound, that it seemed to come from the very bottom of her heart. Some minutes elapsed, and again she rang—“ Have the segars been taken to Mr Lewiston ?” and she seemed relieved when an affirmative was returned.

“ While Mr Lewiston is indulging his taste, then,” said the Countess, “ I must go and dress—the old adage of better late than never, is certainly illustrative of my case to-night ;” and she turned from the mirror, ashamed, for the first time, of the image it reflected.

“ And the best apology I can make for my boots,” said Colonel Delmour, “ is to take them off as fast as possible ;” and the Countess and her lover severally retired to their toilettes.

CHAPTER XXI.

What he did amiss was rather through rudeness and want of judgment than any malicious meaning.

HAYWARD.

UPON returning to the drawing-room, Gertrude found her mother and Colonel Delmour seated at opposite sides of the room—he lounging over some books of engravings—she with her head resting on her hands as if buried in thought. Upon her daughter's entrance she looked up. "Have we had coffee?" inquired she, in a way which betrayed the wandering of her mind; but at that moment Lewiston came into the room, in the loud, noisy manner of an under-bred man, who had taken rather too much wine, and she seemed instantly roused to recollection. She pointed to a seat on the sofa where she was sitting, but his eyes were rivetted on the Countess,

whom he did not at first recognise in her change of dress. When he did, he exclaimed, "By Jove! I didn't know you, you're so rigged out—why, what's going to be acted now? The deuce! I was almost thinking of my bed," and he yawned. Lady Rossville crimsoned, but she caught her mother's eye, and she said in a low voice to Delmour, "Take no notice;" and she began to talk earnestly to him about some of the engravings he was looking at, while Mrs St Clair said,—

"We have brought London hours to the country with us, but we must make a reform."

"Ha, reform! yes, that's a very good word. I like the word reform," interrupted the American. "Reform, reform," repeated he, "yes, it's a good thing, is it not, my Lady? And I will reform your fire in the first place;" and he began to stir and beat it in the most annoying manner—then threw down the poker with a horrid clang, and drawing his chair close to the fire, he put his feet actually within the fender, and rasped and crunched the ashes which he had scattered all over the hearth. Lady Rossville was on the point of rising and leaving the room,

when Mrs St Clair crossed to where she was sitting, and, under pretence of looking at one of the pictures, she pressed her daughter's hand in a significant manner, while, in a low voice, and speaking very rapidly to Delmour in French, she said,—

“ I must beg your forbearance for American manners—you will oblige me by it.”

This was the first time Mrs St Clair had ever addressed Colonel Delmour on easy or friendly terms—their intercourse hitherto had been marked either by constraint or enmity, and now, all of a sudden, she condescended to sue to him. Gertrude could scarcely credit her senses, and even Delmour looked surprised, while he answered with a bow.

After sitting two or three minutes whistling, with his hands clasping one of his knees, Lewiston started up, and pushing back his chair in the same rude, violent manner that marked his every action, he planted himself directly before the fire, so as to screen it from every one else. All this was excruciating to Lady Rosville and Colonel Delmour, both so elegantly quiet and refined in all their habits and movements, and they

exchanged looks with each other, as much as to say, ought this to be endured?

Mrs St Clair perceived it, and hastily said,—

“How shall we pass the evening? Gertrude, my dear, will you give us some music?—Mr Lewiston, are you fond of music—or should you prefer cards?”

“Quite agreeable to either, Ma’am—I like a song—none of your Italian gibberish though—and have no objections to a game;—but, by-the-bye, my Lady, can you play at draughts? that’s the game for me!”

“No, Sir,” was the Countess’s cold laconic reply.

“That’s a pity—but I’ll teach you—you have a draught-board, surely? Ah! there’s a table—still better—Come, my Lady,” and he touched her arm.

Colonel Delmour looked as if he would have shot him.

“Excuse me, Sir,” said Lady Rossville, drawing back, and colouring with indignation.

“No, no, come away—don’t be afraid—you’ll soon learn,”—and again he took hold of her.

“Lady Rossville is not accustomed to be so

importuned, Sir," said Delmour, while his lip quivered with passion.

"Is Lady Rossville, Sir, accustomed to have you for her prompter?" demanded Lewiston, fiercely.

"Colonel Delmour—Mr Lewiston!" exclaimed Mrs St Clair, in violent agitation, "I entreat—I beg—Mr Lewiston, I shall be happy to play at draughts with you—Lady Rossville cannot play—indeed she cannot."

"So much the better—so much the better—I like to teach people—their duty," added he, with an insolent smile, and looking at Colonel Delmour.

"Another time, then," said Mrs St Clair; "but, for this evening, accept of me."

"No, no, I will have my Lady," said the American, with all the determination of unconquerable obstinacy.

"He is either mad or drunk!" exclaimed Delmour, passionately, "and no company for you;" and, rising, he took the Countess's hand to lead her away.

"No, Sir, I am neither mad nor drunk, as you will find," cried Lewiston, placing himself before them; "but I have something to say——"

“ Mr Lewiston !” cried Mrs St Clair, with almost a shriek, “ for Heaven’s sake—Gertrude—Colonel Delmour—what is all this ? How childish—Gertrude, I command you as a daughter, to sit down to draughts with Mr Lewiston.”

“ That’s it—that’s right——” said Lewiston, with exultation. Lady Rossville’s cheeks glowed, and tears of pride and anger stood in her eyes—she hesitated.

“ You must not,” said Delmour, impetuously. “ You shall not.”

“ For God’s sake, obey me !” whispered her mother, in a voice of agony ; and taking her hand she led her to the table—“ Sit down, my love,” whispered she, “ and I will play for you—Gertrude, have mercy upon me !” and she wrung her daughter’s hand as the Countess would have drawn back.

“ Do you submit to be so compelled ?” cried Delmour, almost frantic with rage, at the idea of his beautiful Countess sitting down to play at draughts with a rude, low-bred unknown.

“ Yes, yes,” said Gertrude, moved to pity at her mother’s appeal—“ I will try for once ;”

and she seated herself, and Mrs St Clair took a chair close by her.

Lewiston, satisfied with having carried his point of getting Lady Rossville to sit down with him, allowed Mrs St Clair to play the game for her daughter. He entered into it himself with loud boyish delight—rubbed his hands—snapped his fingers—swore by Jove! and by Jingo!—and when he came to the castling or crowning, always insisted that the Countess should perform that ceremony.

“ I will have all my honours from you,” said he laughing; “ all—all—you shall crown me—you shall castle me—shan’t she?” to Mrs St Clair, who looked the picture of wretchedness, though she strove to keep up with his intemperate mirth.

“ He is certainly mad!” thought Lady Rossville, and she began to feel afraid—she wished for Delmour, but Delmour, in displeasure, had left the apartment, and she heard him knocking about the billiard balls by himself, in an adjoining room. Game after game was played, and won by Lewiston with unabated energy and delight, till at last Gertrude’s patience could endure

no longer, and she rose with an exclamation of weariness.

“ Well, you have had a good lesson for one night, my Lady—let us see how much it has cost you ;” and he began to count over his winnings, then putting them between his hands, he rattled them with a glee, that, under other circumstances, would have been ludicrous.

“ Now, give us a song, my Lady, do—come, mama,” to Mrs St Clair, “ exert your authority—I must have a song. Why, I haven’t heard you sing yet, and I’ve something of a pipe myself.”

“ Lady Rossville has done so much for me, that I am sure she will not refuse me this request,” said her mother, in an imploring manner, as she took her daughter’s hand and pressed it tenderly in hers.

“ I cannot sing,” said Gertrude, almost choking with the conflict of her feelings.

“ What’s the matter ? not in tune ? never mind, you’ll do very well.”

“ The night is nearly over,” said Mrs St Clair soothingly, but in a whisper, as Lewiston, tired of chucking his money, was busy transferring it

to a large silk purse ; “ your compliance may prevent a quarrel.”

“ Would to Heaven this were ended !” said Gertrude with emotion, as her mother took her arm and led her into the music-room—“ Never again shall I submit to what I have this day done !” and scalding tears burst from her eyes.

“ What !—you seem rather piano, my Lady,” said Lewiston, looking at her with a smile ; “ well, I’ll give you a song, since you won’t give me one, and one of your own Scotch ones too—I’m half a Scotchman now you know,” with a wink to Mrs St Clair ; “ so here’s for your glorious Robert Bruce !” And he burst out with “ Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,” in a key that made the very walls reverberate the sound. Yet, to own the truth, he had a fine, deep, clear voice, and sung well in a very vulgar style, with a great deal of gesticulation, clenching of hands, stamping of feet, and suiting of the action to the words. To that succeeded an American song, and another, and another in rapid succession, for his lungs seemed inexhaustible, and he sung volumes of odious political songs with the same vehemence and enthusiasm, till both Mrs St Clair and Lady

Rossville were ready to faint with the fatigue of listening to him. The former, indeed, encouraged him to go on by her applause, while, at the same time, she held her daughter's hand, and by her looks and gestures constrained her, in spite of herself, to remain. To add to the mortification, Delmour, attracted by the noise, had entered the room, but with a look, expressive of his indignation and contempt, had instantly quitted it.

“ Now, my Lady, I've done my part, haven't I ?—I have a right to your song now—come, I must have it—I never gave up a point in my life—I've got a square head, and square heads as well as square toes are all obstinate, at least some people call it obstinacy—I call it firmness—and I'm firm for your song.”

“ This insolence is not to be borne !” exclaimed Lady Rossville starting up, and endeavouring to wrest her hand from her mother's grasp, that she might leave the room—but she clung to her with fear and agony in every lineament. “ I will call my servants,” gasped she.

Lewiston only whistled.

“ Gertrude—Gertrude !—hear me but this once—this is my last attempt.—For such a trifle

would you drive me to destruction?—It will come soon enough, but not now—spare me—oh ! spare me now !”

“ There’s a pretty daughter for you, by jingo !” exclaimed Lewiston, as the Countess stood with her face averted from her mother, who still held her hands in spite of her efforts to liberate them.

Lady Rossville’s passion rose. “ Come what may I care not,” cried she ; “ I command that man to leave my house.”

“ That’s easier said than done, my Lady,” returned he with the most provoking coolness—“ is it not, my good Trudge ?” as he pulled his dog by the ear—“ But, come now, give us the song, the night’s wearing on ;” and he was going to have taken her arm to lead her to the instrument, when, by a sudden effort, she freed herself from her mother’s grasp, and rushed into the adjoining room, where, throwing herself on a seat, she almost sobbed in the bitterness of her feelings. Lewiston’s voice, loud, as if in argument, and Mrs St Clair’s, as if in entreaty, were distinctly heard ; but they added nothing to Lady Rossville’s emotion. In a few minutes her mother joined her in the wildest and most violent agitation.

“Gertrude,” cried she—“I no longer ask your forbearance—your mercy—I see it cannot be!” And she wrung her hands in agony—“To-morrow must end it—Oh that the earth would cover me before to-morrow!”

Violent passion has always the effect of absorbing or annihilating all inferior degrees of excitement, and Lady Rossville was gradually composed at sight of her mother’s real despair. She would even have tried to soothe her, but at that moment Lewiston entered as if nothing had happened.

“Well, you have made a fine row,” said he, addressing Gertrude—“and all for what? Because I asked you to sing a song? You must be deucedly thin-skinned, my Lady, to fly off like a witch in a storm for that—you’ve something to learn yet, I can tell you.”

“She will learn all soon enough,” said Mrs St Clair gloomily, “to-morrow—but let this night pass over——”

“Not without some supper I hope—for your *blankates* lie very light upon me I can tell you,” and he laughed heartily at his own witticism.

Lady Rossville rang the bell for some refresh-

ments, eager to end this hateful evening, and, at the same time, Delmour made his appearance, with evident traces of ill-humour visible on his countenance. But she felt too happy to see him, on any terms, to resent his behaviour—there was protection—there seemed even a propriety in his presence—and her looks brightened, and her tears passed away, when he came and placed himself by her in a manner to screen Lewiston from her sight, who was on the opposite side of the room making a noise with his dog.

“ You have passed a gay, and, of course, a pleasant evening,” said he in a bitter ironical tone ; “ one of your guests, at least, has no cause to complain of lack of courtesy.”

“ Oh ! Delmour,” said Gertrude in a tone of wretchedness, “ do not add to my unhappiness by your reproaches—it is unkind when you see me thus——” and her heart swelled almost to suffocation.

“ It is degrading to you and myself to suffer this,” cried he passionately—“ This instant I will end it by ordering that fellow from your presence.” And he made a movement towards Lewiston—Gertrude caught his arm.

“No—not now—Suffer him for a little longer—to-morrow is to end it—if he does not leave this house to-morrow——” she stopped—a faint red tinged her cheek as she gave her hand to Delmour, and said—“you shall take me from it.”

“Pray Heaven he may remain then,” said Delmour earnestly, “if upon these terms you will indeed be mine !”

Gertrude only sighed—but it was her firm determination, unless this mystery was cleared up, and Lewiston left the house, to throw himself on the protection of her guardian, Lord Millbank—and, holding herself absolved from her promise to her mother, there to have her marriage with Colonel Delmour solemnized.

On Delmour’s side the suspicion was, that Mrs St Clair was privately married to Lewiston—and much as his pride revolted from such a connection, still his interest might benefit by it. Lady Rossville would instantly emancipate herself from her mother’s authority, and give him a legal right to protect her; and it would be easy to get rid of the couple, by agreeing to settle something upon them, provided they retired to America for life.

A tray with refreshments, such as Lady Rossville and Mrs St Clair had been in the habit of taking, was now brought in ; but at which the American expressed great dissatisfaction.

“ Why, these are what we give to our porkers on t’other side the water,” said he, contemptuously taking up a peach—“ and as for your French wines and liquors, by jingo ! I wouldn’t give a glass of good grog for a dozen of ’em. Hark ye, my good friend,” to one of the servants, “ you’ll please to lay a bit of a cloth for me ; and order your cook to send me up a good rasher of bacon, and a brace or two of eggs—a Virginian if you have him, and cut at least as thick as my finger ; and, Mr Butler, I’ll trouble you for a bottle of your best Hollands—that’s the thing ;—but faith I’ll go down and see the porker cut myself—where does your kitchen lie ?” And away he marched.

“ Let us to bed,” said Mrs St Clair, in a tone of suppressed torment, and as if taking advantage of his absence to leave the room ; her daughter rose to accompany her, but she lingered behind a moment to say to Delmour,—“ You will not remain here I hope ?”

“No, I shall leave the butcher to use his knife upon his porker, and go to my own apartment—I pray he may make a good supper here for some nights to come,” added he with a smile.

But Lady Rossville shook her head and sighed, then followed her mother to her dressing-room.

“I will say nothing to-night,” cried Mrs St Clair, as she entered, “leave me, then—leave me.”

“At least, mama, suffer me to stay with you a little.”

“Not an instant—leave me, I say,” cried she, impatiently. “What would you have more than my ruin and your own?—that, I have told you, you have nearly accomplished.

“Be it so then,” said Gertrude with emotion; “there can no ruin surpass the disgrace and ignominy ——”

“Peace!” exclaimed Mrs St Clair; “you will drive me mad,” and she put her hand distractedly to her forehead.

Gertrude would have embraced her, but she repelled her.

“To-morrow your embrace may be of some

value to me—to-night it is of none—it is worse than none—I will not have it,” and she pushed her daughter from her—“ Leave me, I command you,” cried she, violently ; and Gertrude was obliged to obey. No sooner was she outside the door than she heard the lock turned upon her, and when Mrs St Clair’s maid came, she was refused admittance. Lady Rossville was terrified ; and she lingered long at her mother’s door, and heard her walk backwards and forwards, and groan as if in anguish ; but when she tapped, or spoke to her, she was instantly silent, and would make no reply. As her apartment communicated with her mother’s, several times, in the course of the night, she rose and listened, but the same thing went on, and the morning was far advanced before, exhausted as she was, she could compose herself to sleep.

CHAPTER XXII.

O visions ill foreseen ! Better had I
Liv'd ignorant of future ! so had borne
My part of evil only.

MILTON.

WHEN Lady Rossville awoke one subject naturally engrossed her mind to the utter exclusion of every other. This was the day of her cousin Anne's marriage, and she had promised to be present ; but the thoughts of that, never once occurred to her—every thing was absorbed in the intense interest she felt as to the disclosure that was to take place—or failing that, the strong measure which she had determined upon as to her own disposal. Upon leaving her own apartment, she hastened to her mother's, but the door was still fastened—she knocked repeatedly, but no answer was returned—she listened—all was silent—her heart trembled within her, and she was on the

point of calling out, when she bethought her of a back-stair communicating with the dressing-room, by which she might probably gain access. She was not disappointed—the door was open, and she entered her mother's bed-room; but it was dark, except here and there where a bright ray of sunshine chequered the floor, and the candles, which had been burning all night, cast a sickly gleam as they died away in their sockets. Gertrude hastily withdrew a window-curtain, and opened a shutter, and there discovered her mother asleep in an arm-chair, in the dress she had worn the preceding evening, and which formed an unnatural contrast with her situation and appearance.

A phial, marked Laudanum, stood on a table by her, and it was evident that she owed her sleep to medicine, not to nature. Such as it was, it was certainly not rest that she enjoyed, for she was disturbed and agitated—sighed heavily, and muttered some unintelligible words, as if in an agony, and Gertrude's name was once or twice pronounced with a kind of shriek. Shocked beyond expression at beholding her mother thus haunted by her sense of wretchedness even in sleep, Lady

Rossville felt it would be humanity to rouse her from such a state, and after a while she succeeded. Mrs St Clair opened her eyes, but it was some time before she came to her recollection, or that her daughter could make her comprehend perfectly how and where she was.

“ I fear, mama, you have taken too much laudanum,” said she in alarm, as she looked at the bottle.

“ Too much—and yet not enough,” answered her mother with a sigh.

“ Allow me to send for Doctor Bruce,” cried the Countess in increasing agitation—“ you are ill, mama, indeed you are ;” as she pressed her mother’s burning hand in hers.

“ I shall soon be better,” said Mrs St Clair with a still deeper sigh—“ What time is it?—I have been asleep, I believe—shall we sup ?” as she looked upon her dress with a bewildered eye.

“ O, mama, suffer yourself to be undressed, and put to bed.”

“ No—I will go to—to breakfast, is it ?—yes, I remember now, to breakfast,” as she looked up to a blazing sun, then turned to a mirror—“ Will my dress do, Gertrude ?”

Lady Rossville was too much shocked to reply, for the contrast was frightful, between her mother's gay, handsome dress, and her parched lips, haggard cheeks, and distended eye-balls.

"The air will revive you, mama," said she, as she led her mother to the window, and threw it open; but the lovely landscape seemed as though it smiled in scorn upon her, for all things looked fresh, and renovated, and happy. Mrs St Clair sat for some time with her head resting on her hand; at length, she suddenly looked up, and said abruptly—"You are very fond of Rossville, are you not, Gertrude?"

"O! it is Paradise to me," said the Countess, as she looked on her towering woods and far spreading domain; "but why do you ask, mama?"

"Then you will never part with it?" cried Mrs St Clair, in a tone of wild interrogation.

"Never—never!" exclaimed Lady Rossville, emphatically; then recalled to her mother's situation, she said in a soothing voice,—“Do, mama, allow me to ring for Lisle to undress you—it will refresh you.”

"And what then?" interrupted Mrs St Clair;

“but I know what I have to do—yet I would see that man once more before—perhaps—yes—I will—ring for Lisle then;” and she began impatiently to tear, rather than to take off her ornaments. “Now, go—leave me—why do you stand there looking upon me?” cried she, angrily.

Lady Rosville burst into tears. “It is distracting to me to see you thus, mama, and to think I am perhaps the cause——”

“Perhaps !” repeated Mrs St Clair, bitterly ; “there is no perhaps—you *are* the cause.”

“Only say in what way—tell me how—trust me, and I will do all——”

“All but the very thing I require of you,” interrupted Mrs St Clair, impatiently,—“all but obedience and forbearance—all but duty and patience—all but love and tenderness. Answer me then, once for all—’tis for the last time I put the question—its consequences be upon your own head—Can you—will you be guided by me in your behaviour to Lewiston?”

“I cannot,” said Lady Rosville, in an agony of grief.

“Then go,” cried her mother, ringing the bell

violently for her maid—"not another word—if your fate is sealed, do not blame me;" then, as her maid entered, she waved her hand for her daughter to leave her, and Gertrude withdrew, afraid to irritate her by farther opposition.

"What can this dreadful mystery be?" was the question that had naturally presented itself at every turning of her mind, till thought had been lost in the mazes of conjecture. The idea which most frequently occurred was, that her mother must have been previously married to Lewiston, and, in the belief of his death, had become the wife of St Clair. But then his youthful appearance ill accorded with such a supposition—indeed, seemed to render it altogether impossible; and again the idea was rejected for others which were no less improbable. "Be it what it may,"—thought she, "this day must end it;" and at that moment, in crossing the hall, she suddenly encountered the object of her dread and her wonder. He looked heated and ruffled, and as if he had been engaged in a squabble. "So," said he, seizing her hand before she was aware, and looking earnestly in her face, which bore traces of her agitation—"So you have been with the old lady

I see !—Well, has she let the cat out of the bag, or she has left it to me ?”

Some of the servants just then entered the hall, and Lady Rossville, without answering, passed on to the saloon, where she hoped to find Delmour ; but he was not there. Lewiston followed, and again began—

“ What, all in the dark yet ?—what’s the old lady about ?—But, by Jove ! I’ll not wait another day to be treated as I have been by you and your confounded rascallions. But I’ve given one of your grooms, as you call them, a settler. I’ve given him a bit of a nob on the side of his head, to keep him in mind of his duty—and I’ll have them all broke in for you, by-and-bye ;—a set of lazy, insolent, eating and drinking scoundrels that you keep about you—and one of these low-lived rascals to pretend to pass off his airs to a gentleman like me——”

“ This is past all bearing !” cried Lady Rossville, as her face flushed with shame and indignation at having been thus disgraced to her servants—“ I command you instantly to quit my house, or my servants shall compel you to it ;” and she stretched out her hand to ring the bell.

Lewiston hastily snatched it, and looked at her with an expression which made her tremble even in spite of her resentment.

“Do you know who it is you are speaking to?” said he.

“I neither know nor care,” said the Countess, while her heart beat as though it would have burst. Lewiston was silent for a minute—he then said abruptly, but in some agitation,—

“What if I am your father?”

Gertrude gazed upon him with a look almost bordering on idiocy—her lips were apart, but no sound came from them.

“It’s very true though—ask the old lady, her you call your mother, if it an’t—she’ll confess it, that she will. She’ll tell you you’re no more Countess of Rossville than I am—you’re the daughter of Jacob Lewiston here—and your nurse ——”

But Gertrude could hear no more—she had fainted.

“The deuce!” exclaimed he, in some consternation at this unlooked-for result. “Why, I’d better have let the old one manage it her own way, after all;” and, ringing the bell, he desired the

servant to fetch Mrs St Clair cleverly, for that her Ladyship the Countess was in a fit. The alarm was instantly communicated, and the whole house was presently in commotion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

What ! shall such traces of my birth appear,
And I not follow them ? It may not be !

SOPHOCLES.

LONG ere Gertrude had power to uncloset her eyes the frantic exclamations of her lover had pierced her ear, as he hung over her in an agony of apprehension—and joy sent the first faint blush to her cheek, and spoke in the look with which she met his anxious gaze. For a moment all was forgot by her, or rather seemed as a hideous dream, and Delmour, kneeling by her side in all the agitation of love and fear, was the only image that presented itself.

“ I hope, my Lady, your Ladyship feels better,” said Lewiston, thrusting himself forward ; but at the sound of his voice, a deadly paleness again overspread her face, and her senses forsook her.

“ Will none of you drag that madman away ? ” cried Delmour, passionately, to some of the servants, who were bustling pompously about with glasses and decanters.

“ No—no—no,” shrieked Mrs St Clair, throwing herself between Lewiston and them, as they approached him ; “ Marshall—Jourdain—on your peril touch him.”

“ Send instantly for advice,” cried Delmour, wildly, as Gertrude’s lifeless hand grew colder even in his grasp—“ make haste—bring Bruce—Smith—all of them—why do you stand there ?—By Heaven ! she will be gone——” and snatching every restorative offered by the housekeeper and ladies’ maids, he would administer them himself. Once more Gertrude slowly opened her eyes, and again they rested on her lover.

“ It was—all—a dream—was it not ? ” said she, in a low gasping voice.

“ Ah ! our Countess is herself again,” cried Lewiston, in a loud significant tone, as much as to say, “ Keep your own secret.”

“ Protect me ! ” murmured she, as she convulsively held Delmour’s hand, and again relapsed into a death-like swoon.

“ For Heaven’s sake retire !” cried Mrs St Clair to Lewiston, dreading some scene of violence when Delmour should extricate himself from Gertrude’s unconscious grasp—“ only to the next room, till this is over—if,” added she in a whisper—“ if you would prevent discovery go——” and she led him to an adjoining room, and shut the door. Once more Gertrude’s marble features showed signs of returning life ; but she neither spoke nor opened her eyes—she remained motionless, as if unwilling to be scared by sight or sound, or aught that could break the death-like repose in which she lay.

“ Lady Rossville—dearest——” exclaimed Mrs St Clair, as she would have lifted her hand—but when she spoke, a tremor shook Gertrude’s whole frame, and she recoiled from her touch with a shudder.

“ Gertrude—my life ! suffer Mrs Roberts and Masham to assist you to your dressing-room—you will be quieter there—no one shall enter but those you wish to see—they shall not indeed, my angel.”

But a low convulsive sigh was Gertrude’s only answer.

“ Gertrude—speak to me—say what it is that

has alarmed you—tell me what you wish, and it shall be done,” cried Delmour, in an accent of grief and tenderness, which seemed to thrill to her heart. “ Shall I order the carriage to take you to Lord Millbank’s ?” added he in a low voice.

“ O—no—no,” cried she, putting her hands to her face.

“ Colonel Delmour, I must entreat that you will not thus agitate Lady Rossville,” cried Mrs St Clair ; “ this is neither a time nor a place for such questions ; when she has had a little quiet repose in her own apartment——”

“ I will not lose sight of her again,” interrupted Delmour passionately, “ till I see her in safer hands than any here.”

“ This is too much,” cried Mrs St Clair, struggling to preserve her composure ; and dreading every instant lest the disclosure (which she at once perceived had taken place) should burst from Gertrude’s lips, if Delmour persisted in talking to her ; “ but I submit—suffer her to be removed to her own apartment, with Mrs Roberts and Masham to attend upon her till this nervous attack has subsided, and I consent to remain here till the arrival of Dr Bruce.”

Delmour could not object to this arrangement, for Mrs Roberts was a discreet and respectable person in her way, and both she and Masham were devoted to their lady—he therefore consented, and she was accordingly conveyed there, and left to the care of her two faithful attendants, who received the strictest injunctions upon no account to speak to her. Mrs St Clair felt secure, that, unless in a fit of delirium, she would not betray herself to them, and if, in that state, she did drop anything of the truth, it would all pass for the raving of fever. Gertrude was therefore left to silence and to darkness, while Mrs St Clair and Colonel Delmour, by a sort of mutual understanding, seemed resolved not to lose sight of each other. He, indeed, was bent upon more than that—he was determined that instant to force an explanation of the mystery, which involved such a person as Lewiston (and that in no common way) in the family concerns of Lady Rossville, and, ringing the bell, he ordered the servant to inform Mr Lewiston, who was in the next room, that his presence was desired in the saloon.

At this message, Mrs St Clair turned pale and trembled—she rose from her seat—she would have

stopped the servant, but she knew not what to say, and before she could summon recollection, Lewiston entered, and her confidence returned at sight of his free unabashed air.

“ Well,” said he, accosting Mrs St Clair with an air of freedom ; “ you see I am yours to go and to come—but what have you made of my Lady ?”

“ You are not here to ask questions but to answer them, Sir,” said Delmour, his lip quivering with passion. “ I insist upon knowing by what right you have intruded yourself into this house ?”

“ I must first know what right you have to ask the question,” retorted the other, boldly.

“ Colonel Delmour,” exclaimed Mrs St Clair, eagerly, as she saw his flashing eyes, and dreaded some act of violence—“ Mr Lewiston is a friend of the family—he is my friend, that is enough——”

“ Your friend !” repeated Delmour contemptuously—“ that is indeed enough, quite enough, to warrant Lady Rossville seeking other protection.” He rang the bell furiously—“ Desire Lady Rossville’s travelling-carriage and my riding-horses

to be ready at a minute's warning," called he to the servant.

"Hark ye, my man, there's no hurry about the first," cried the intolerable Lewiston—"we shall have two words about that yet, by Jove!"

But the servant evidently disregarding him, bowed his acquiescence to Delmour, and withdrew.

"What is the meaning of this, Colonel Delmour?" cried Mrs St Clair in the most violent agitation.

Delmour endeavoured to speak coolly while he said—

"It was settled last night, by Lady Rossville, that while Mrs St Clair's unknown friend remained here, this was no fit residence for her—She leaves it, therefore, for the protection of her guardian, Lord Millbank; and when Dr Bruce arrives, I intend that he shall accompany her." And he looked with the sort of resolute indifference of one whose determination could not be affected by any circumstances.

"This is the most extraordinary proceeding, Colonel Delmour," said Mrs St Clair, pale and trembling.—"You can have no authority for

such interference in my——in Lady Rossville's situation, to take her from her own house—from my protection—it shall not be."

"No, faith—by Jove! she shall not stir a foot from this house to-day," cried Lewiston, "nor any day without the leave of those who have something of a better right to dictate to her Ladyship than you have, Sir," and he nodded to Mrs St Clair, as if to encourage her.

Delmour's passion was at its climax, and he could no longer suppress it.

"What is this infernal mystery," cried he to Mrs St Clair, "which allows such a person to dare to talk in this manner?—I will know it—Something is at the bottom of all this—if——" and he seemed almost choked to utter it—"if this man is, as I suspect, your husband——"

"No—oh no!" shrieked Mrs St Clair, wildly.

"Well, and if I am the Lady's husband, Sir, what then? What is your objection to me, Sir? My Lady Countess's proud stomach, it seems, can't put up with me for her father—but what is that to you? you're not my Lord yet, and one gentleman's as good's another."

"Colonel Delmour—oh no—help me—I am

not—I ——” exclaimed Mrs St Clair, in a state of distraction, at finding herself caught in such horrible toils. But again Lewiston interposed,—“Come, come—’tis of no use to deny it now—the thing’s over, and my Lady will come to herself by-and-bye, when she finds she can’t make a better of it—there, I told you ——” as a servant entered, to say that his Lady wished to see Mrs St Clair immediately.

Delmour, who had been pacing the room in a perfect tumult of passion, stopt short at this—and demanded of the servant, who had brought this message ?

“Miss Masham, Sir,” was the reply.

“Then desire Miss Masham to come and deliver it herself, Sir,” cried he, fiercely : and Masham, not without fear and trembling, confirmed the fact. He then abruptly quitted the room to traverse the gallery opposite the Countess’s apartment, and see that no one else obtained entrance.

At sight of Mrs St Clair, all Gertrude’s tremors returned upon her, and again she relapsed into successive fainting-fits, from which her attendants with difficulty recovered her. At length

she became more composed, whether from strength or weakness, and, in a faint voice, inquired for Mrs St Clair, who, conscious of the impression she made upon the victim of her guilt, had retired out of sight.

“ Mrs St Clair is there, my Lady,” whispered Mrs Roberts.

“ Then leave me, Roberts. Masham, go—I will ring when I want you.”

But they still lingered.

“ Colonel Delmour, my Lady, forbade that we should lose sight of your Ladyship, upon no account, till the Doctor’s arrival.”

“ Colonel Delmour !” repeated Gertrude.—
“ Ah !”—and tears, the first she had shed, burst from her eyes; they gave her a temporary relief, and she, with some difficulty, dismissed her faithful attendants, and Mrs St Clair once more approached her. Many and bitter were the tears shed on both sides before either had power to utter a syllable. At length Mrs St Clair said,—

“ Can you forgive me, Gertrude ?”

But Gertrude only turned away her head and wept the more—then suddenly looking up, by a violent effort she stopt her tears ; and, while they

yet hung round her eyes, and her pale lips quivered, she said,—

“ Tell me all——”

“ Oh, not now—spare yourself—spare me,” cried Mrs St Clair, with a fresh burst of weeping.

“ No, no—there is nothing to spare—say that it is not—that he ——” and again she seemed as though she would have fainted, as the thoughts of Lewiston, her father, rushed upon her.

“ Oh tell me all—I must—I will know all !” And Mrs St Clair was obliged to commence a broken and weeping narrative of the events of her early days.

CHAPTER XXIV.

—————O light ! thy beams no more
Let me behold, for I derive my birth
From those, to whom my birth I should
Not owe.

SOPHOCLES.

SHE dwelt upon the injurious and exasperating treatment she had received from the Ross-ville family, as though she sought in their conduct an excuse, or, at least, a palliation for her own. She spoke of the exile and the poverty in which she had for so many years dragged out a joyless existence—of her husband's disinheritance—of the utter hopeless insignificance of their lot, as outcast childless annuitants on the one hand—or the brilliant destiny which seemed to court them on the other, where riches and honours awaited them in the person of their offspring.

“ It was at this time,” continued the wretched

narrator of her own guilt—"that accident brought me acquainted with—with Marian La Motte——"

"With my mother—was she not?" interrupted Gertrude, in a voice of repressed agony. Mrs St Clair's only answer was a burst of tears. Gertrude hid her face on the cushion of the couch on which she lay, and without looking up, in the same tone, said—"Go on—tell me all."

"In her I discovered the daughter of Lizzie Lundie, whose name and history had been familiar to me in my younger days. She had emigrated to America with her husband, and upon his death, had married a French Canadian—Marian was the child of that union, but at this time her parents were both dead, and she was the wife of Jacob Lewiston, an American trader, whom she had accompanied to Bourdeaux. She was then in absolute want, for his vessel had been wrecked, and the whole cargo lost; but, at the time I became acquainted with them, he obtained a situation on board a merchantman, and went to sea again, leaving his wife in delicate health to earn her livelihood, as she best could, till his re-

turn. To complete her wretchedness, she looked forward to giving birth to a child——”

Here Mrs St Clair stopped, overcome with her feelings, then suddenly seizing Gertrude’s hands——

“ Gertrude ! Gertrude ! God knows I had then no evil thoughts ! I had not, indeed ; but when she besought me on her knees, that if she should die a stranger in a strange land, and leave an orphan baby, I would be as a mother to it——Oh, then the tempter assailed me !”

“ Would that I had died ere I saw the light !” exclaimed Gertrude in an agony of grief.

“ O, Gertrude, do not tear my heart, by forcing me to retrace what can be of no avail——what can it signify, now, to tell you of the thoughts——the fears——the struggles I endured myself——of the arguments and entreaties I used with her and my husband to induce them to co-operate in my schemes ? It is enough to tell you, that it was done——that we quitted Bourdeaux on pretence of returning to Scotland, and that at Bagnolet you were brought into the world as the heiress of Rossville——and such you still are, Gertrude——the secret is known but to yourself, and those who ——”

“Hush!” exclaimed Gertrude, wildly, and with a shudder.

“There cannot be the possibility of discovery if you will but——”

“You have not told me all,” cried Gertrude, hurriedly.

“Gertrude, I will not survive the shame—the infamy——”

“Tell me all—all quickly—Why did he leave her?—Why has he so long?—it is about him,” gasped she, “I would know.”

“From the day that he left her, his wife never heard any tidings of him, and we at last naturally concluded he had perished at sea. Still there was no positive certainty of this being the case, and she always cherished the hope of seeing him again—for she loved him, Gertrude, indeed, she did.” But Gertrude only wept the more, to think that she could not love her father.

“Your mother—Oh, Gertrude, how dreadful is it to me to call another by that title!” and again Mrs St Clair wept long and bitterly, then went on—“Your mother had been long threatened with a consumption, and when she found herself dying, she had, it seems unknown to me, written

a letter containing the secret of your birth, which she had had attested by her Priest, (for you know she was a Catholic;) this she confided to his care, receiving his solemn promise, in return, never to divulge its contents, or part with it to another than Jacob Ruxton Lewiston of Perth-Amboy, New Jersey.

“ Years after, this man went to America as a missionary ; and there, alas ! it was our evil fortune that he should find your father !—I need not tell you that he came immediately to Britain to claim you.—You must well remember our first meeting, and the mysterious interviews that followed—he would even then have made himself known to you, that he might have established his authority over you ; but I prevailed upon him to forego his claims, at least till the Earl’s death.—Oh ! had he known you as I do, he would never have dared the disclosure—but you will not, Gertrude—you cannot be so infatuated—he is your father,—as such he is entitled to your duty, your obedience——”

“ Now—now—no more,” cried Gertrude, covering her face with her hands.

“ Gertrude, only say you will not be so mad—

for Heaven's sake, promise me you will not.—Gertrude, he threatens to carry you off to America should you drop a hint of——Oh ! for the love of Heaven, be calm—think of your mother. You loved her, Gertrude, for her sake then—”

“ My mother ! how could she sell her child !” exclaimed Gertrude, wringing her hands in an agony.

“ She did not sell you, Gertrude.—Never mother loved her child as she doated upon you.—While she lived, you may remember you were never out of her sight—worlds would not have bribed her to have parted with you—and now could she see you thus great, and——”

“ Oh ! that she had suffered me to remain the beggar I was born !”

“ Do not talk thus, dearest Gertrude, if you would not kill me—compose yourself, and all will yet be well—it will indeed——your father——”

“ Do not—do not call him—Oh God ! forgive me, wretch that I am !” exclaimed she, almost frantic with horror at herself for so abhorring his name.

“ Well, your mother, my dearest—think of her—think how you loved her—had she lived, you

would not have shamed her with this disclosure.—You will not bring disgrace upon her memory.” And Gertrude wept softer tears, as she called to mind the well-remembered proofs of her mother’s love.

“How could she do it?” cried she again, roused to agony.

“Ah, Gertrude! can you wonder the temptation was too strong to be resisted?—Consider how we were both situated.—You could bring nothing but additional care and poverty to her—to me you would ensure riches and honour—do not condemn us.—Gertrude, say you forgive me?”

Gertrude’s whole frame shook with emotion, but she remained silent.

“Gertrude—Gertrude!” cried Mrs St Clair, seizing her hands, “have I not been as a mother to you—will you not say, you forgive me?”

“I cannot!” gasped Gertrude, in a wild suffocating voice, and she turned shuddering away.

Her maid now entered to announce the arrival of Dr Bruce, adding, that Colonel Delmour hoped her Ladyship would see the Doctor without delay.

“Lady Rossville will ring when she is ready,”

said Mrs St Clair, in violent agitation ; then when Masham withdrew, she cried, “ Gertrude, you will not betray yourself to Dr Bruce ! promise me—promise me that, for the love of Heaven !” and she wrung her hand.

“ To him !” repeated Gertrude—“ No—I will not see him at all, why should I ?—’tis a mockery—leave me—leave me to myself,” cried she, with a fresh burst of grief.

But just then Masham returned to say, that Colonel Delmour was very impatient for her Ladyship to see the Doctor ; and as she spoke, Delmour’s voice was heard outside the door. At the dear loved sound, again Gertrude’s pale cheek glowed for a moment, and her eyes brightened, but in another instant, she dropped her head with an air of hopeless dejection—and Dr Bruce was now ushered in.

Mrs St Clair anticipated all questions, by taking the Doctor apart, and telling him candidly, as she called it, that the Countess was suffering under a severe nervous attack, and that something of a composing nature was what was wanted. Gertrude was, therefore, spared answering any questions, and having felt her pulse, ad-

ministered some drops, and recommended quietness, the Doctor withdrew to make his report to Delmour, who was impatiently waiting for him. Mrs St Clair, at the same time, hastened to Lewiston to prevent him, if possible, from doing more mischief; and Gertrude was once more left to the care of her attendants, who imagined she slept, from the still and silent state in which she lay.

CHAPTER XXV.

O fortune! with what weight
Of misery dost thou crush me! — — —
This is a stain fixed by some vengeful power,
Surpassing thought; all that remains of life
Must waste away in anguish; such a sea
Of woe swells o'er me, that never can I rise
Again, or stem the surge of this affliction.

EURIPIDES.

BUT sleep was far from Gertrude's eyelids; and in the multitude of her thoughts within her, she felt as though she should never know repose again. Her very soul sickened, and her brain whirled at the horrible destiny just opened to her. To fall from her high estate to a condition so vile and abject—instead of the heiress of a mighty house, the daughter of a noble line,—to be a beggar—an impostor—the child of one against whom her whole being revolted! Yet voluntarily to proclaim this to the world—to stand forth a mark for the finger of scorn to point

at—to be laughed at by some—despised by others—to leave each thing beloved most dearly—to become an outcast—an alien—Could she do this and live? No, she would pass away in secret—she would consume her days in grief and in penitence—she would abjure, renounce, fly all that she had loved and enjoyed—she would dwell in darkness and in solitude—few and sad would be her days, but she would go down to the grave as Countess of Rossville—her “soul was ready to choose strangling rather than life,” for what had life now to offer to her of good or fair? Delmour—— ah ! there her heart trembled within her—this day she had promised to be his !—At that instant a note was delivered to her, which Colonel Delmour himself had brought to the door of her apartment, and insisted on its being instantly delivered.

“ I claim your promise, dearest Gertrude—Dr Bruce is of opinion you may be removed to Millbank with perfect safety—if you wish it, he and Masham will accompany you in the carriage, and I shall attend it—say but yes, my angel, to your adoring F. D.”

Here was a fresh wave of misery to overwhelm

the unhappy Gertrude ! The cup of happiness was held to her lips by the hand she loved, and she herself must dash it to the ground for ever ! Poor—low-born—degraded as she was, what a bride for the proud high-minded Delmour !

“ And Delmour—would even Delmour despise and reject me if he knew all ! ”—thought she, as, for a moment, she covered her face with her hands, and bowed beneath the humiliation. But soon a loftier feeling succeeded. “ No,” thought she, as a bitter pang shot through her heart—“ if we must part, it shall be nobly—he shall learn all from myself—He loves me, and he will love me still—but he loved me as Countess of Rossville—he must now love me as an outcast—a beggar——”

She desired her maid to say to Colonel Delmour that she would see him in the library ; then, rising, she bathed her eyes and adjusted her hair, and endeavoured to dispel, as much as possible, the traces of grief and agitation from her face.

“ I will not go to him a weeping suppliant ! ” thought she—“ I will owe nothing to his pity,” and she repressed each rising emotion, and with a calm and lofty air, entered the apartment where

her lover awaited her. But what a change had a few hours of intense suffering made upon her ! Her mutable countenance had now all the fixedness and the paleness of marble, and those eyes—those lovely eyes, which had so often met him with smiles, and which always “seemed to love whate’er they looked upon,” now heavy and brimful, drooped beneath the weight of her swollen eyelids.

“Gertrude—my own—my adored,” cried Delmour, as he took her passive hand, and led her to a seat—“Speak to me, dearest—it is death to me to see you thus.”

Gertrude opened her lips and vainly tried to articulate ; but her tongue seemed to cleave to her mouth.

“This is dreadful—it will kill you to remain in this house—you must leave it, indeed you must, my love—your carriage is ready—suffer me to order it,” and he was going to ring the bell, when Gertrude laid her hand upon his arm—Again she strove to speak, but a sigh, so deep, so sad, burst from her heart, as told the unutterable anguish of her soul.

“Gertrude ! my life !” exclaimed Delmour ter-

ror-struck, as he felt her hand grow colder, and saw her features gradually becoming more rigid ;
“ for God’s sake speak to me.”

Gertrude spoke, but her voice was so changed, that Delmour started at the sound.

“ You love me, Delmour, I know you do—and I—but no matter—I never can be yours now—Delmour, I have a strange, a frightful tale to tell you—I—I am not what I seem—I am not Countess of Rossville—I am a beggar !” she hid her face for a moment, while Delmour, too much amazed to answer, remained silent.

“ It is true—they have told me all—all—all—I am *his* daughter—*he* is my father,” and her voice grew wilder in her attempts to speak calmly and firmly.

“ My dearest Gertrude, you take this matter too violently, although your mother has made a degrading marriage, that ought not to affect you in this manner—it does not interfere with your rights, or diminish my attachment to you—why then ——”

“ Ah ! Delmour, you are deceived—she is not my mother—I am *his* daughter—the daughter of

Jacob Lewiston—I have been an usurper, but I did not know it.”

The dreadful truth now flashed upon Delmour with the force and the rapidity of a stroke of lightning, and he remained horror-struck beneath its shock. For some minutes neither of them spoke—but Gertrude’s breast heaved with agitation she would not betray, and her eyes were distended in endeavours to retain her tears within the brim.

“ Good God !” at length exclaimed Delmour, striking his forehead in a distracted manner—“ Gertrude—dearest !” and he seized her hands. “ No—it cannot be—you are mine—my own ——”

“ Not now, Delmour,” said Gertrude, and her heart almost broke, in the effort to appear calm in resigning him.—“ Not now——you are free !” added she in an accent of despair.

“ Free—Oh ! Gertrude, my life !” and he paced the room with disordered steps, then suddenly stopping—“ No—you must—you shall be mine—I will not believe it—by Heaven ’tis false !—you—you the daughter of that ——”

“ Oh ! he is my father !” cried Gertrude shuddering.

“ No—there is some infernal plot at the bottom of this—it shall be cleared up,” and he was hurrying towards the door, when Gertrude called to him—

“ Stay, Delmour, ’tis from me you shall hear it all—I will not that you should hear it from another, that you have loved an impostor—a beggar,” and with desperate energy, she recapitulated to him the evidence of her birth, as detailed by Mrs St Clair. When she had ended, Delmour said nothing, but he buried his face in his handkerchief, in an agony of grief, and Gertrude’s high-wrought fortitude almost forsook her, as she beheld her lover thus overcome—she felt she could not long support the continuance of the scene, and she said—

“ Now I have told you all, Delmour—I am no longer what I have been—from this hour let my shame—my disgrace be proclaimed, and—let us part.”

“ Gertrude, if you would not drive me mad, do not—Oh ! you know not how I love—how I adore

you !” and he pressed her hands to his lips, and Gertrude felt his burning tears fall upon them, and every drop was as a life-drop from her heart.

“Gertrude !” exclaimed he passionately, “you have never loved as I do, or you could not be thus unmoved.”

A faint smile of anguish was on Gertrude’s pale lip, and a single tear rolled slowly down her bloodless cheek.

Again a long and bitter pause ensued. Delmour still held her hands in his, while he seemed to struggle with contending emotions. Suddenly Lewiston’s loud voice was heard, as if issuing some orders in his usual authoritative tone. The blood rushed to Delmour’s face—he started up, and dropped the hands he had but a moment before clasped in his own—Gertrude, too, rose—cold drops were upon her brow, and she shook in every joint—but, by a desperate effort, she gained the door.—She thought she heard her name pronounced by Delmour in an accent of tenderness and despair—but a thousand sounds were ringing in her ears—a thousand figures were be-

fore her eyes—and she only reached her own apartment when all sights and sounds had vanished, for she fainted.

CHAPTER XXVI.

What greater gryefe may comê to any lyfe
Than after sweete to taste the bitter sower ?
Or, after peace, to fall at warre and stryfe,
Or, after myrth, to have a cause to lower ?
Upon such props false Fortune buylds her tower,
On sodayne chaunge her flitting frames be set,
Where is no way for to escape her net.

THOMAS CHURCHYARD.

DELMOUR's whole mind was a chaos of conflicting passions. That he loved was undoubted, but his love was compounded of many ingredients—pride, vanity, ambition, self-interest—and now all these were up in arms to oppose each purer or more generous sentiment that might have found place in his heart. In this state of excitation he sought Mrs St Clair, who was yet ignorant of what had passed in her absence ; but Delmour's disordered looks and wild incoherent expressions soon proclaimed that all was disclosed. To deny or prevaricate she felt would be in vain—the terrors of guilt and of shame were upon her—in-

famy and ruin had overtaken her. There was nothing left to suspicion or conjecture—the evidence was infallible—it was her own. Still, while her very soul sunk beneath the weight of her crime, her proud spirit refused to humble itself before the man she hated, and her only reply to his reproaches and invectives was, that he would now have an opportunity of proving the sincerity and the disinterestedness of his attachment.

More than ever exasperated, Delmour hastened from her to shut himself up in his own apartment. Distracted at the thoughts of the evil which had come upon him, his soul was tossed in a whirlwind of contending passions. To resign Gertrude—his own beautiful, his betrothed Gertrude—there was despair in the thought;—but to marry the descendant of the huntsman—the daughter of Lewiston—it was madness to dream of such degradation!—Innocent as she was in herself, there was a stigma affixed to her name which never could be effaced—a changeling! the child of wretchedness and imposture! No!—he never could dishonour himself and his family by such an alliance. Then the image of Gertrude, rich in native loveliness

—the tender, confiding, noble-minded Gertrude rose to view, as if to mock the littleness of that pride that would have spurned her.

Delmour passed a sleepless night, and the morning found him resolved to renounce Gertrude for ever ! But how to do it was the difficulty—to see her again was impossible—He attempted to write to her, but could not.—He felt that he was about to pierce a heart which beat but for him, and his hand shrunk from the barbarous task. But something must be done—it was impossible that Lewiston and he could remain under one roof—he shuddered at the thoughts of meeting him—meeting him as the father of Gertrude—the man who, but for her disclosure, might even now have been his father-in-law—yet to send him from the house would be to turn Gertrude also from the home which but yesterday she had held as her own, and that was too cruel even for Delmour's selfish heart. The result of his deliberations was, that he would leave things as they were, and repair to London to consult with his brother upon what ought to be done ; and having formed this resolution, he wrote as follows to Gertrude :—

“ DEAREST, ADORED GERTRUDE,

“ I WILL not attempt to paint to you what I have suffered since that sad disclosure took place ;—would to Heaven it were in my power to raise you to that height from which you have fallen, or rather from which you have so nobly cast yourself :—but, alas ! my beloved, by uniting your fate with mine at present, I should only involve you in deeper ruin. I have neither wealth nor power to bear you through this overwhelming tide of misfortune ; and yet to lose you—voluntarily to renounce one a thousand times dearer to me than my own existence—No, Gertrude, I cannot—I will not resign you—mine you are in soul and in love—are you not, Gertrude ? You never can love another—and what other ever could love you as I have done ? My brain is on fire—I scarcely know what I write, but you will understand me, dearest, most beloved——It is better that we should not meet. I will depart, but you shall remain here as mistress for the present. I will see my brother—but, until then, let nothing more be said on this heart-rending disclosure Farewell, dearest ——pity your distracted, but adoring, F. H. D.”

Meanwhile, Gertrude had remained in a state of morbid woe, infinitely more alarming than the wildest ebullitions of grief. She neither spoke nor wept, but remained silent and passive—her glassy eyes fixed on vacancy, and her ear unconscious of every sound.

When Delmour's note was brought to her, she closed her eyes, and turned away her head from it—while she thought, "It is all over—he has cast me from him!"

"It is from Colonel Delmour, my Lady," said Masham, soothingly, who concluded there was a lover's quarrel in the case. "He is most petiklarly anxious to hear how your Ladyship is this morning."

Still her Lady remained motionless.

"The Colonel looks so ill, my Lady—I'm sure it will break his heart entirely if your Ladyship does not take his letter."

A deep sigh burst from Gertrude's heart; but Masham hailed it as a happy omen, and went on.

"Dear, my Lady, if you did but see the Colonel, I don't think you'd have known him—his face, my Lady, is as white as your handkerchief, and his beautiful eyes, my Lady, quite red, for

all the world, as he had been crying—indeed, my Lady, I could scarce keep from crying myself to look at him ;” and, upon the faith of this pathetic appeal, Masham made another attempt to prevail upon her mistress to take his letter ; but again Gertrude rejected it.

“ Dear, my Lady ! what shall I do ? I could no more tell the Colonel that you would not look at his letter, than I could put a knife into his heart, my Lady—just the same thing—Oh ! my Lady, Smith says he hasn’t been in bed all night ; but has been walking up and down his room, tearing his hair, my Lady, and taking on so, that he says, he’s sure he’ll lose his senses, unless something is done, my Lady.” And Masham ended with a sob ; for Delmour’s gaiety, his good looks, and his liberality, had completely won Masham’s favour. “ I’m sure, my Lady, he’ll either kill himself or somebody else, if your Ladyship refuses him, for——” but at the horrid idea of Delmour and her father engaged in mortal strife, Gertrude shuddered ; then taking the letter, she tore it open, and, as she read it, tears again found their way to her eyes—

“ Rash—unjust—misjudging that I am !”

thought she—" he does not—he will not renounce me—Involve me in deeper ruin by uniting my fate with his !—Ah !—no—no—'tis I who would involve him in ruin—Yes—I am his in soul and in love ;" and the hard unnatural tension of mind under which she had laboured gradually melted into softer feelings. " But he loves me—why—why then does he leave me?" and again her doubts and her fears returned ; but then there was so much delicacy in wishing to have the discovery of her disgrace kept secret, until he could have made arrangements for her, she had no doubt, to soften the blow as much as possible, that again her sanguine spirit exulted in the truth and honour of her lover. Had she followed the dictates of her own feelings, she would instantly have declared herself to her whole household ; but Delmour had besought her not, and painful as it was, she thought, for his sake, she would submit for a while to carry on the deception.

But she would not appear—she would not see the light—she would pass the time in darkness and in solitude—and her soul sickened at the very idea of ever again beholding Mrs St Clair and Lewiston. That lady and she had not met since

the disclosure had been made—she had then hastened to her own apartment, and there, under the influence of guilt, shame, and passion, had swallowed the remainder of the laudanum contained in the phial, which, although not sufficient to make her sleep the sleep of death, had the effect of throwing her into a convulsive stupor, from which she could not be roused. Dr Bruce had taken leave, after prescribing for Gertrude, whose disorder he soon discovered was altogether of a mental nature, and as such beyond his skill. Lewiston had, therefore, been left to carouse by himself, and to be his own master of the revels. He was a man of much too coarse a mind to conceive the delicacy of such a character as Gertrude's, and had always laughed at the idea of her being such a fool as to betray her own secret; he, therefore, remained quite unconscious of the storm which was ready to burst upon him. Being always on the watch to spy every thing that was going on, he soon came to the knowledge of Colonel Delmour's intended departure, which he heard of with great exultation, and thought the field was now his own. His vulgar curiosity, therefore, led him, as usual, into the midst of the

preparations, and he lounged about the carriage while it was packing—questioned the servants—examined and patted the horses—and waited till Delmour appeared, when he briskly accosted him with—

“ So, you’re for the road, Sir—fine morning—my Lady’s four bays will carry you at a famous rate—you only have them as far as Barnford, I guess.—I had some thoughts of taking them out myself to-day to give the ladies a ride—but you’re welcome to them, Sir—quite welcome—the greys will do for us.”

Delmour, with difficulty, refrained from spurning him, but he repressed his rage, and, as he passed, said in a low voice :—“ Beware how you abuse the indulgence shown you in the name of the Earl of Rossville, for the sake of one ——” He could not finish, but, throwing himself into the carriage, drove off.

There was something so stern and commanding in his eye and voice, and yet so melancholy and subdued in his manner, that Lewiston felt alarmed—“ The Earl of Rossville, who the deuce is he ?” was his exclamation as he turned quickly round, and entered the house—Could any body

have blabbed? not Mrs St Clair—not Gertrude, for it was the interest of both to conceal it—no, the thing was impossible, but he must see them—and he immediately sent a message to Mrs St Clair, demanding an interview. But it was answered by her maid in great agitation, to report that her lady had with the utmost difficulty been roused from her stupor—and that she was not herself, her mind was wandering—the Doctor must be sent for.

“Come—come—I’m for none of your Doctors,” cried Lewiston—“a confounded, prying, useless, swindling pack—Why, what did that pompous fellow do for my Lady Countess yesterday? felt her pulse, and gave her a glass of water—eh—and for that he pockets his five guineas—the deuce! Why a man would be ruined in this country if he were to give way to women’s nonsensical vagaries—Come, I’m something of a doctor myself, I’ll go and see your lady—come along”—and drawing Mrs Lisle’s arm within his, he marched along, and, in spite of her remonstrances, made his way to Mrs St Clair.

But she was, as her maid had represented her, in no condition to answer questions or receive

company—there was a total aberration of intellect, and even Lewiston's presence made no impression on her. He was so far relieved to find she was not in the way of endangering the secret, as she merely muttered to herself a few unintelligible words about her daughter, then repeated the word daughter to herself many times over without ceasing.

“She'll come to herself by-and-bye if you'll let her alone,” said Lewiston, as he left her with the resolution of next seeing his daughter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Non, je ne serai point complice de ses crimes.

RACINE.

GERTRUDE's restored confidence in her lover had given an impulse to her mind, and she was beginning to recover in some degree from the dreadful shock she had sustained, when Lewiston's message, desiring to see her again, deprived her of the little composure she had regained. Her agitation was so excessive, that Masham, in alarm, summoned Mrs Roberts, and both agreed that it would be as much as their lady's life was worth to see any body that was not particularly agreeable to her at present ; and this opinion Mrs Roberts delivered in person to Lewiston, who, from some hints he had thrown out that morning to the servants, was generally considered as the

husband of Mrs St Clair, and consequently the step-father of their lady. This idea was farther confirmed by Colonel Delmour's sudden departure; and in that capacity he found himself feared and obeyed, where he would otherwise have been ridiculed and despised. After swearing a little at Mrs Roberts's communication, he said—

“ Well, Goody, take you care of your lady—feed her well—give her plenty of good stout meat and drink—none of your slip-slops—none of your meal and water, and poultices—your gruels and panadas, as you call 'em—by Jove ! I'd have a fit of hysterics myself, if I was to be fed upon such gear—Hark ye, Goody, if there's such a thing as a nice plump little sucking pig to be had, now's the time—have it killed directly, and it will be prime for my lady's dinner—and do you hear, tell that French fellow of a cook to take care to have the ears crisp, or, by jingo ! I'll slit his own for him !—Stop, Goody,” as Mrs Roberts was retiring in silent horror—and he pulled out his watch—“ Now, go you to my Lady Countess, and say, that, as I'm a reasonable good-natured man, and always behave handsomely when I'm treated handsomely, I shall allow her twenty-four hours to

settle her brains, or her spirits, or whatever is wrong—and then—remember she must be to a minute!—I shall expect her to do her duty, and wait upon me here in this very room, and at this very hour, with a merry face—as much sooner as she likes—to-day she'll be welcome, but not a minute after the twenty-four hours—not a second—now trot, Goody—don't forget the pig—a three weeks old will serve my Lady Countess.” Mrs Roberts here suggested the propriety of medical advice being called, but she was cut short with—“By Jupiter! if any of your doctors come here, I'll show 'em the way out at the window—there's no doctor like meat and drink”—and he went off singing a vulgar sea song. He then went to order out all the horses, which he made the servants parade before the house, while he tried some of them himself—then ordered a chaise-and-four, and two outriders, as if he had been going a journey; but he merely drove up and down the avenue, till, tired of that, he fell to coits with the servants; and, in short, completely illustrated the homely adage of, “Set a beggar on horse-back,” &c.

Gertrude felt grateful for the respite allowed

her, and she resolved, if possible, to prove her obedience by meeting her father, and, at the same time, declaring to him what she had done, even although she trembled to think of all she would have to encounter. Should he persist in his threat of carrying her off to America, what would become of her?—who could interpose between a father and his child?—who could—alas! who *would* save her? There was no one to whom she could appeal—for there was no one being with whom she could claim any kindred, save him to whom she owed her being. Where was Delmour at this trying moment?—why had he deserted her?—His was the voice to have whispered peace to her soul—his the arm to have supported and protected her—but he, her only earthly prop, had left her!

She was roused from the overwhelming conviction of her own utter helplessness, and the frightful destiny that perhaps awaited her, by the indefatigable Masham, who, in her softest accents, besought her Ladyship's pardon. But there was a box of new dresses just arrived for her Ladyship from Madame Delacour—such beauties! they were fit for a princess!—would

her Ladyship be pleased only just to take a look of them—"See what a *deshabille*, my Lady—when you please to rise, how charming it will be!"

Time was when Gertrude's eyes would have sparkled with pleasure at sight of the beautiful dresses now displayed—but she turned from them with a shudder, and desired they might be taken away.

"These were for the Countess of Rossville," thought she, with a bitter pang; "and I, impostor—beggar that I am—shall I ever again dare to appear as such?" She covered her face with her hands, and groaned in spirit—then, as if struck with some sudden thought, she called her maid—

"Masham, I would have a dress very different from any of these. I would have one made of the coarsest of stuffs, such as—as poor people or charity children wear." She stopped to wipe away the tears which covered her face, while Masham stood in speechless amazement. "It must be very coarse and quite plain, Masham; and you must set about getting such a one for me directly."

"Sure, my Lady, you don't mean it for your-

self?" cried the amazed Masham, doubting either her own or her Lady's senses had gone astray. But her Lady repeated her commands in so peremptory a manner, that Masham dared not expostulate on the subject, but set about obeying the order, strange and unseemly as it appeared.

Gertrude had inquired for Mrs St Clair, and she was told she was keeping her room ; and she asked no farther, for the mention of her name was an effort almost too much for her, associated as it was in her mind with all the degradation and ruin she had brought upon her.

Heavily as the time wore away in tears and solitude, the hour appointed by Lewiston drew near too soon. In the interval he had sent many messages, which, rough and wayward as they were, yet showed a species of kindness in their way ; but his ideas of affection seemed to be of the lowest description ; and the only way in which he testified his, was through the medium of meat and drink—and many was the savoury mess he dispatched to Gertrude, who turned with loathing from such coarse demonstrations of paternal regard.

Gertrude clothed herself in the sordid garb

which had been prepared for her ; but her beauty was of too noble and decided a character to be dependent upon adventitious aid—the regularity of her features—their touching expression—the sadness of her dove-like eyes—the paleness of her complexion contrasted with the dark ringlets which fell negligently around her face—the exquisite form of her head and throat—her distinguished air, even in humility—all these only appeared the more pre-eminent in the absence of aught to distract the attention. Averse to having the appearance of being compelled to meet her father, she repaired to the saloon rather before the appointed time—she entered, with downcast eyes and a throbbing heart, unconscious of every thing but that she was to meet, for the first time, as her father, him who had so long been the object of her fear and her abhorrence. But what was her surprise, when, upon entering, the person who sprung forward to meet and to welcome her, and to press her hands in his—was Lyndsay !

“ Gertrude, dear Gertrude ! ” exclaimed he, as he gazed upon her sad and colourless countenance, “ How ill you look ! Something is wrong.” But as the recollection of their last meeting rushed up-

on Gertrude's mind, her heart swelled at the thoughts of her abasement, and the blush of shame rose almost to her brow.

"I have heard—and it is that report has brought me here now—that the man whom you have such cause to dread is an inmate of your house—at least, I guess it is the same—tell me, Gertrude, is it so?"

"You will hear all soon enough," said Gertrude, in a low suffocating voice—"Leave me—oh! leave me now!"

"Now, nor never, Gertrude—till I see you safe and happy," cried Lyndsay, with emotion. "Gertrude, I am your cousin—your friend—your brother if you will—speak to me then as such—say, what can I do to serve you?"

But Gertrude only answered with her tears; then repeated—

"Leave me—Oh! leave me!"

"I will, if there is any one here to protect—to save you——"

At that instant Lewiston entered with the swagger of a man who wished to show he was quite at home. At sight of Lyndsay he started, and was

evidently disconcerted; but quickly recovering, he said, with his usual assurance—

“ So, Sir, I didn’t expect to find you here—I’ve just been seeing some young puppies have their ears cropped—Sit down, Sir ;” then approaching Gertrude, who rose to meet him, and bowed her head towards him, he took her hand and shook it.—“ Well, my Lady Countess, how goes it now ?—By jingo !” as he surveyed her dress—“ you women are always in extremes.—Why, to day, you’re dressed like a charity-school girl !”

Lyndsay was too much confounded to speak—he had heard, in a vague way, that a foreigner, whom no one knew any thing about, was living at Rossville with the ladies—and that Colonel Delmour had left it abruptly in consequence of a quarrel—with various other particulars, some true, some false, which had been circulated by the servants, and soon reached the ears of their masters and mistresses. No sooner had Lyndsay heard them, than, forgetting all Gertrude’s unkindness and ingratitude, he thought only of how he could serve her, and instantly set off for that purpose.

He had only arrived the moment before she appeared, and the first glance at her, had told him a tale of woe and suffering, that filled him with grief and amazement. The gay, proud, brilliant Countess of Rossville was gone, and there stood the sad, humble, downcast Gertrude, in passive endurance of, if not actually inviting, familiarity which formerly her high spirit would have spurned. He looked at her for a moment in silence, and again the deadly paleness, which had overspread her face at Lewiston's entrance, was succeeded by a deep flush, and she raised her hand as if to hide it from his view.

"Well, Sir," said Lewiston, seating himself on a sofa, and placing Gertrude beside him, while he still held her hand, "this is not our first meeting—but let that pass—you're my Lady Countess's cousin, I understand, eh?—that's enough—Sit down."

"You have the advantage of me, Sir," said Lyndsay, bridling his indignation for Gertrude's sake; "it seems you know who I am—who you are, I have yet to learn."

"All in good time, Sir—Would you choose to take a glass of any thing after your ride, or a

bit of cold meat? There's a nice little fellow of a pig that I ordered for my Lady's dinner yesterday, and she wouldn't look at him it seems, so I've ordered him for my lunch to-day—as fat as an eel and as tender as a chicken, I'll answer for him—I saw him scalded myself.”

Agony was painted in every feature of Gertrude's face—Lyndsay saw it, and, wishing to end this strange scene, he said calmly to Lewiston—

“ Lady Rossville seems too unwell to take an interest in such discussions—if you will accompany me to another room——”

“ With all my heart,” cried Lewiston jumping up—“ You say true, my Lady is a little nervous or so, but she will soon get over it,” with a wink to her.

Gertrude rose too—her colour changed from white to red, and from red to white, and she gasped as though she were suffocating—at length, by a violent effort, she said—

“ Go then—but Lyndsay—remember he is——my father !”

Lyndsay stood speechless, and for a moment Lewiston was thrown into consternation, but

quickly recovering himself, he said—"Aye—come along, it shall all be explained," and he took hold of Lyndsay, and moved impatiently towards the door—but Lyndsay saw only Gertrude standing motionless in shame and anguish—her head bent beneath her humiliation, and the cold drops of agony on her brow—he flew towards her.

"Gertrude," cried he, wildly—"what do you mean? your father! speak, tell me ——"

"Well, since the cat's out of the bag," cried Lewiston—"you may as well catch it at once—I'm married to my Lady Countess's mother, so I am—that's all—what is there so wonderful in that?" And again he cast a fierce and threatening look at Gertrude.

"Is it even so, Gertrude?" said Lyndsay. "Then this can be no home for you at present ——"

"The deuce!" said Lewiston, fiercely—"what right have you to meddle between a father and his daughter?—I am her step-father, and I have the best right to manage her," and he would have taken her hand, but Lyndsay placed himself between them.—"Lady Rossville once chose me for her

guardian—she will yet acknowledge me as such—Will you not, Gertrude?—you will trust yourself with me, and I will place you in safety.”

“ Oh, he is my father—my own father !” cried Gertrude in an accent of despair.

“ Surely—surely !” exclaimed Lewiston hastily—“ I am the husband of her mother—her own father—you say true—I am—I am.”

“ No—no—no,—she is not my mother—she told me all—he *is* my father,” and Gertrude almost shrieked as she uttered it.

“ She is mad,” cried Lewiston—“ I say she is mad.”

“ ’Tis you have made her so, then,” said Lyndsay, passionately, then turning to Gertrude—“ Dearest Gertrude, try to compose yourself—retire—I will ——”

“ O, he is—he is my father !” repeated Gertrude, convulsively.

“ Confound you for an idiot, as you are !” cried Lewiston, fiercely, and he seemed ready to strike her, had not Lyndsay stood between them.”

“ Save me—Oh, save me from him !” and Gertrude clung to Lyndsay’s arm—“ but he is ——”

“ I will, dearest Gertrude, do not be afraid—” then turning to Lewiston, he said, in a voice of forced calmness, but with an air of the most resolute determination—“ You are mistaken, if you suppose, that, as the husband of Mrs St Clair, you have acquired any lawful authority over this lady.—If you claim it by any other tie, you must first bring forward your evidence, and have it recognized, before it can be acknowledged—in the meantime, Lady Rossville is under my protection—I am her guardian, and from her own lips only will I listen to what has passed—You will do well, then, to leave this room without altercation, otherwise it may be unpleasant for you.”

“ Oh ! no—no,” cried Gertrude, in an agony of terror—“ he is my father, do not use him ill.”

“ Don’t you hear her acknowledge my authority ?” cried Lewiston ; “ and what title have you, then, to interfere, you confounded meddling block-head ?”

“ Gertrude, will you go into the next room for a few minutes ?” said Lyndsay, and he would have led her to the door.

“ Aye, do—go along,” cried Lewiston ; “ wo-

men are always better out of the way when there's business on hand."

"I will not leave you," said Gertrude, as pale and trembling she still held by Lyndsay.

"But I order you to——"

"Speak but another syllable to this lady," interrupted Lyndsay, on the point of losing all self-command, "and I will instantly call the servants to force you from her presence."

"Coward!" cried Lewiston, furiously.

The blood rushed to Lyndsay's brow.

"Edward, dear Edward!" cried Gertrude, "do not—he is my father."

"I know you only as Lady Rossville, and as such I *will* speak to you alone," said Lyndsay. He rang the bell, and when the servant answered it, desired him, in a calm but firm manner, to show that gentleman to the library, then waving his hand to Lewiston, in a way that showed he would be obeyed, he said, "I will join you there in half an hour;" and Lewiston, casting a threatening look at Gertrude, and muttering imprecations on Lyndsay, was thus compelled to withdraw.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

He whose mind
Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind ;
Though poor in fortune, of celestial race ;
And he commits the crime who calls him base.

DRYDEN.

BUT it was with difficulty Gertrude could be brought to repeat to Lyndsay all that she had already recapitulated to Delmour. She had then been under an excitement of mind, to which every thing had given way—she had felt as though she were then about to cast the die for life or death, and, in the energy of desperation, she had told all with the eloquence of feelings which mocked control. But here there was no such stimulus, and she shrank from repeating the hateful and ignominious detail of her disgrace. It was throwing herself too much upon the sympathy and the commiseration of one on whom she had no claim—one whom, in the hey-day of her prosperity, she

had treated with coldness and ingratitude—and she leant her burning brow on her hand, and strove to steel herself against the kind and affectionate entreaties Lyndsay used to gain her confidence. At length, he gathered from her such particulars, as enabled him to trace out the whole of the dark transaction which had involved her in ruin. For a time his emotion kept him silent, while Gertrude sat with her elbows resting on a table, and her face buried in her hands. But Lyndsay was ever more intent on allaying the afflictions of others, than in indulging his own feelings; and he soon mastered his own agitation, that he might be the better able to calm Gertrude's—but his voice faltered as he spoke.

“Dearest Gertrude,” said he, “I know it will be in vain to talk of comfort to you in the first anguish of your mind—but—ah! Gertrude, could you discern the hand that has thus smitten you—could you look up to Heaven, and say, it is my Father's will.”

“I do,” cried Gertrude, in a low suffocating voice. But, alas! the feeling burnt feebly in her breast.—“And any thing but this I could have

borne—but disgrace—infamy——” her emotion choked her utterance.

“ No, Gertrude, you are unjust to yourself—ungrateful to God—if you attach such ideas of personal degradation to what has befallen you—’Tis true you have no longer a title—a vain empty title—or wealth to spend perhaps to satiety—but how much nobler a being are you now, thus dignified by voluntary self-abasement, and rich in all the native gifts of your Creator, than ever you were, or would have been, as the mere favoured child of this world?—Ah ! Gertrude—dear Gertrude, could you but view yourself with my eyes !”

“ To have been an impostor—an usurper !” exclaimed she.

“ How perverse sorrow has made you, Gertrude !—You are neither—you have been the victim of imposture, but your own name is pure and spotless—it is more—to those who can appreciate virtue it will carry a nobler sound along with it than any that heraldry could have bestowed—How poor is the boast of ancestry, compared with that lofty sense of honour, which has made you trample under foot all those allure-

ments, to which your soul still cleaves even in renouncing !—This is greatness !”

“ Who but you will judge me thus ?”

“ All who love virtue—all who love you, Gertrude——”

“ Love me !” repeated she, relapsing into an agony of grief—“ Oh ! who could love me—base—vile—abject as I am ?”

“ Gertrude !” cried Lyndsay, in emotion almost equal to her own—“ do you, indeed, ask who could love you ?”

But Gertrude was silent, for her thoughts were all of Delmour. Lyndsay’s agitation increased.

“ You ask me who could love you, Gertrude ? he who has once loved you truly will love you still—will love you more than ever—I——” he stopped, then took two or three turns about the room in great disorder, while Gertrude, absorbed in grief, and thinking only of his words, as applied to her lover, was little aware of what was passing in Lyndsay’s generous heart. In a few minutes he regained his usual calmness, and approaching her, took her hand and said—

“ Gertrude, you are unable to stand this storm which has come upon you—you must retire to

your own apartment, and allow me to act for you—I promise you that nothing shall provoke me to violence—I promise you that I will bear every thing.”

“ Oh ! you have borne too much already for me,” cried Gertrude with a burst of weeping.—“ My best—my only friend,” added she in a voice choked with emotion.

“ You will then look upon me as your friend—as your guardian—as your brother—will you not, Gertrude ?—such and all will I be to you, so help me God !”

Gertrude could not speak, but she pressed the hand which still held hers, in grateful acknowledgment, and relying on Lyndsay’s promise, as she knew she well might, she, at last, consented that he should see her father alone, and that she should await the result of the conference.

After seeing her mind somewhat strengthened, and her spirits more composed, Lyndsay then repaired to the library, where he found Lewiston vainly attempting to hide his rage, by affecting to busy himself in coolly turning over the books, while it was evident he was only exercising his fury upon them. He took no notice of Lyndsay’s

entrance, but went on tossing over the leaves of a splendid folio, in a manner enough to have made a bibliopolist faint ; then began to whistle with an air of unconcern, which, however, did not sit very easily upon him.

Lyndsay waited a few minutes in silence, then said—

“ I have been hearing a strange tale, Sir, from one ——”

“ Have you so, Sir ?” rudely interrupted Lewiston, looking at an engraving in the book, as if deeply interested in it ; “ have you so—and what then ?”

“ Then I would have your account, Sir, of the same story.”

“ You would ?—then I must trouble you, Sir, to let me know what your story is in the first place, that we may understand each other, Sir.”

Lyndsay repeated what Gertrude had communicated to him, and added—

“ It is, therefore, in vain to attempt to carry on any farther concealment—the truth must be proclaimed—but for the sake of one, whom hitherto I have only known as a dearly loved relative, I would fain have it softened, as ——”

“ Confound her for an idiot !” exclaimed Lewiston furiously, as he hurled the book from him with violence, and pushed over an inkstand—then kicked back his chair, and drove everything aside, while he took two or three strides across the room, biting his thumb in the manner of one who must have something, no matter what, on which to wreak his passion.

Lyndsay was too judicious to interrupt him ; disgusting as the spectacle of uncontrolled passion was, for Gertrude’s sake he submitted to it in silence. At length Lewiston stopped, and said abruptly—

“ Has the fool blabbed to anybody else, or are you her only father confessor ?”

“ I cannot tell whether the disclosure has been made known to any one else,” said Lyndsay, for Delmour’s name had not been mentioned between them ; “ but it can signify little, since it must soon be made public.”

“ Well, she deserves to suffer for her confounded folly—but—you seem to have a liking for the girl, fool as she is ?” then, as if communing with himself, “ She is handsome—very handsome—

I've seen nothing like her—she'll make a figure in New Jersey—she'll go well off there."

Lyndsay tried to be calm, even at the idea of the beautiful high-souled Gertrude taken to America to be bartered—sold—by such a savage, and said, "Even if you are the person you give out, it does not necessarily follow, that this unfortunate lady must be compelled to reside with you."

"Why what's to become of her?"

"It is unnecessary to discuss that question at present—but be assured, she possesses friends, whose influence and fortune—neither of them inconsiderable—will be devoted to her service."

"That is to say, you would marry her such as she is? Well, as you seem to have a liking for her, I'll tell you what—if the thing has gone no farther, and I don't think it has—or t'other spark wouldn't have set off as he did—why, since you're fond of her, I'll give my consent that you should have her, upon condition that all's to be kept snug—she'll come to her senses by-and-bye, and be sorry that she's played the fool this way—And more than that, if you'll agree to settle handsomely upon me, I'll engage to go back to my own country,

which is the best after all ; and, since we don't put up together, let us keep on different sides of the Atlantic—What do you say to that, Sir ?”

“ I say you are a villain,” burst from Lyndsay's lips ; “ and I must have the most clear undeniable evidence that you are the person you profess to be, before I will give credit to it—I do not believe you are the father of Gertrude,”—and he fixed his eyes upon him, as though he would have searched his very soul.

The blood rushed to Lewiston's face, and for some minutes he was silent, then recovering himself, he said, in his usual manner—

“ I'm all you'll have for him though, Sir, whether you believe it or not—I am Jacob Ruxton Lewiston of Perth-Amboy, New Jersey ; and that you'll find, if you'll be so good as step over the way and inquire.”

“ That may be ; but there may have been more Jacob Ruxton Lewistons than one.”

“ Why, haven't I got my wife's letter here ?” taking out a pocket-book, and holding it up with triumph—“ haven't I the testimony of the priest who witnessed it ?—and he is still alive too, and forthcoming if wanted, and who swore to her never

to give it into any hand but her husband's? And isn't there Mrs St Clair ready to swear to me when she comes to herself?—what the plague would you have, Sir?"

"All that is insufficient——"

"Perhaps you judge by my looks—I've wore well, I grant you—but I'm eight-and-thirty for all that—married at nineteen—the more fool——"

"Nothing you can now say will have the slightest effect in removing my doubts," said Lyndsay.

"Faith I care very little about it," said Lewiston, with affected coolness; "you may keep your doubts, and welcome, for me."

"That I shall certainly do, till I have obtained better evidence than your own. I will send a person, on whose fidelity and prudence I can perfectly rely, to the place from whence you say you came, to procure proofs of your identity—when he returns with these you may then claim your daughter—but not till then.—I am her guardian, and will be answerable for her safety ——"

Here Lewiston burst out in a strain of the coarsest invective and imprecations; but Lyndsay remained calm and resolute, and only said—

“ In these circumstances, you must be aware this can be no residence for you. You will do well, therefore, to prepare to leave it as soon as you can make your arrangements; and, if the means are wanting, I am ready to furnish you with what is necessary.”

He then left the room, and hastened to Gertrude, who was waiting him in an agony of apprehension.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Tout se sait tôt ou tard et la vérité percé.

GRESSET.

It was with caution Lyndsay communicated to Gertrude the suspicions which he entertained; but, to one of her sanguine spirit, the slightest surmise was sufficient to kindle hope in her breast. It was certain she was no longer Countess of Rossville; but not to be the daughter of this man—not to loath and shudder at him to whom she owed her being, even this seemed almost happiness. But then, as she thought of the difficulty of procuring evidence from so distant a quarter of the world, her spirit sunk—and she exclaimed,—“ But how impossible for me to obtain information, and how vague and unsatisfactory must it be !”

“ Trust that to me, dear Gertrude,” said

Lyndsay. "I will send, by the first ship, a person who will thoroughly investigate into this man's history, and on whose testimony you may safely rely. I would go myself if that would be more satisfactory to you, and if I saw you in a place of safety."

"Oh, Lyndsay!" cried Gertrude, with a burst of tears which, for a moment, choked her utterance—then passionately exclaimed—"You protect and save me, while he ——!" she uttered a sob, as though her heart had broke, then remained silent.

Blinded as Gertrude was by romantic passion, she could not but be struck with the contrast between her lover's conduct and that of Lyndsay; and the conviction rushed upon her heart with a bitterness which, for a time, absorbed every other consideration. With emotion, scarcely less than her own, Lyndsay now inquired whether she had divulged the secret to any one else. Gertrude struggled for a few moments to regain her composure—then said, "Yes—to one whom it more nearly concerned than any other—and now I wait but to hear from him to make known my disgrace to the whole world."

“How false—how worldly are your notions of disgrace, dear Gertrude!” said Lyndsay. “But I will not stop to combat them now; tell me what you wish to have done—what are your plans?”

“It is Colonel Delmour’s wish that I should remain here until I hear from him,” said Gertrude, in a faltering voice.

“Be it so, then,” said Lyndsay, with emotion; “but remember, Gertrude, you have a home, if you will deign to accept of it; my house is yours to command. My aunt, Mrs Lyndsay, whom you have heard me mention, is now in Scotland, and will reside there with you. You would love her if you knew her—for she is good and gentle, and knows what suffering is: for myself, I shall possibly go abroad for a time—or—but, in short, I can be at no loss—so promise, that if ——”

“No—no, I never will be a pensioner on your bounty,” cried Gertrude in violent agitation—“I will work—beg—Oh! Lyndsay, how you wring my heart!”—and she leaned her head on a table and wept bitterly.

“Forgive me, dearest Gertrude, if I have

hurt you—God knows it was far from my thoughts!—and now, let me recommend to you to retire to your own apartment—you will be safe from intrusion—and leave everything to me—Rest assured, there shall no violence be used—he shall be treated as your father, though not recognized as such.”

“ But ought I not to see him once more?—and—Oh! Lyndsay—if I should have turned my father from the house! no—I cannot—Suffer him to remain—he is—he must be my father—he could not have imposed upon her!”

“ At such a distance of time it is quite possible he might—but, dear Gertrude, confide in me, I will do nothing harshly—but you cannot remain under the same roof—it will kill you—he shall go to my house—he shall be well treated—indeed he shall.” And Gertrude, calmed by these assurances, at length consented to shut herself up in her own apartment, and even to refuse to see Lewiston if he should attempt it. Lyndsay’s next business was to visit Mrs St Clair, in hopes of elucidating something from her;—but he was shocked at the situation in which he found her, and immediately sent off for medical assistance,

and also to Mr and Miss Black, requesting them to come to Rossville as soon as possible. He had scarcely done all this, when Lewiston entered the room where he was, with a mingled air of confusion and effrontery.

“ So, Sir, you’re going to raise the country, it seems—two men on horseback galloping away there as if the deuce were in them—What’s the meaning of all this?—I must see my daughter,” added he abruptly.

“ When you have established your claim to that title you shall see her—till then, I have already told you, I act as her guardian,—and, as such, I will not consent to your meeting—if you had the feelings of a parent you would see the propriety of this.”

“ Feelings !” exclaimed Lewiston ; “ by Jove ! my feelings have been prettily treated since I came amongst you—may I be flayed if ever I met with such usage.—Feelings—by jingo !—I say my feelings have been confoundedly ill-used—and I feel it too ;” and he walked up and down in great discomposure.

“ She whom you call your daughter is not unmindful of your feelings,” said Lyndsay ; “ al-

though, by my advice, she declines a meeting, which could serve no purpose but to agitate and distress her—but she is very desirous that you should be treated with consideration—that you should have every comfort and indulgence which you may require, and I shall therefore make a point of seeing you properly accommodated.”

“What does she mean by all this palaver?—does she mean by comfort and indulgences, and so forth, a round sum of money?—If she does, I comprehend that—give me money, and faith I’ll soon find comforts and indulgences for myself.”

“You must be conscious, that, as your daughter, she can have nothing to bestow,” said Lyndsay; “but I possess the means; and when assured that you have told me the truth—one way or other—for the truth is all I require from you—we shall then perhaps be able to come to an agreement.”

Lewiston remained thoughtful for a few minutes, then said, “Has the goose quacked to any but yourself?—I want to know.”

“Colonel Delmour has been made acquainted with all the particulars, and is gone to consult

with his brother, now Earl of Rossville, as to what is to be done—Be assured, at their hands you will meet with little indulgence.”

Here Lewiston broke out into an execration against Delmour, and against Gertrude, both of whom he denounced in the bitterest terms—then suddenly changing his tone, he said, “It will cost you something, I can tell you, to send to New Jersey, that it will—a few dollars I can tell you.”

“I have already told you, I am ready to pay a good price for the knowledge of the truth, be it what it may,” said Lyndsay.

“What! even supposing—only supposing you know—that I were not the girl’s father?”

“Perhaps I should be inclined to pay more for that discovery than for any other,” said Lyndsay, trying to hide his emotion; “but I again repeat, it is the truth, and the truth only, I require—and that, sooner or later, I am sure of arriving at—a few months will bring me the knowledge of that.”

“I tell you it will cost you money!”

“And I have told you I am ready to pay it.”

“ Why, how much do you reckon upon—what lengths are you ready to go—eh ?”

“ I am willing to go any lengths to detect fraud and villainy, but not to reward it—I am perhaps wrong in offering to come to any compromise with you—but regard for the peace of one who is suffering from your villainy induces me——”

“ Will you give a thousand pound ?” interrupted Lewiston abruptly.

“ No—I will give more if necessary to discover the truth, but I will not reward falsehood in the same measure.”

“ Confound your distinctions ! Will you give five hundred ?—by jingo ! I won’t bate a half-penny.”

“ Upon condition that you swear solemnly to tell the whole truth,” said Lyndsay, “ I will do more for you than I am perhaps justified in doing—I will pay your expences from America and back to it—and I will settle an annuity upon you of fifty pounds per annum, upon condition that you give up that letter, and never set foot in Britain again.”

“ I’d rather have a good round sum at once—I want——”

“ It is in vain to say more on the subject,” said Lyndsay ; “ if you wish to have an hour to reflect upon it you may—but that must be all.—I shall immediately set about the necessary steps to be taken in this affair, and it is likely you will repent having refused my offer when too late.”

He was moving away, when Lewiston caught his arm.

“ Well—will you put in black and white what you have agreed to give, and—and then—we shall see ?”

Lyndsay immediately took up a pen and wrote his offer. Lewiston took it—looked at it—hemmed—coloured—and became confused—at last, plucking up effrontery, he said—

“ Well then—I am *not* the girl’s father, and that’s as true as that God made me.”

At this acknowledgment Lyndsay’s heart thrilled with rapture, and he could scarcely refrain from flying to Gertrude with the joyful tidings. Lewiston went on—“ But I am of the same blood—the only one, by-the-bye, remaining—

and the same name—I was her father's cousin, and when the old dotard of a priest came to Perth-Amboy, and inquired for Jacob Ruxton Lewiston, to be sure, he found me—'twas by way of humbug, at first, that I passed myself off for the man who had been drowned nearly twenty years before ; but, when I found what his business was—but that's enough—I hate long stories—and so, as soon as you can let me have this on a proper bit of parchment," pointing to the paper Lyndsay had given him—" then I'll wish you a good afternoon."

" But how came you to impose yourself so easily upon Mrs St Clair ?" inquired Lyndsay, anxious for Gertrude's sake to ascertain everything. " She had seen the person you represented ?"

" She had so—but it was near twenty years ago—and there was a family likeness, it seems ; besides, I had the letter to shut her mouth, and since I was master of her secret, it signified little to her whether I were the girl's father or not—I had got the upper hand of her any how."

Having got all the information that was wanted, Lyndsay was now only desirous of being rid

of so worthless an inmate, and after admonishing him upon the iniquity of his ways, he gave him a letter to his agent, directing the money to be paid, and the bond to be made out for his annuity, then only waited to see him fairly out of the house before he communicated to Gertrude the happy result.

CHAPTER XXX.

Plus nous étions jeunes, moins nous avions de résignation ; car dans la jeunesse, surtout l'on s'attend au bonheur, l'on croit en avoir le droit ; et l'on se revolté à l'idée de ne pas l'obtenir.

MADAME DE STAEL.

For a time Gertrude felt as though she were again restored to all she had lost, in her joy at finding she was not the daughter of the man whom her very soul abhorred ; and, at the moment, all other evils seemed light compared to that she had just escaped.

She could not find words to thank Lyndsay for his generous interference, (though that was only known to her in part ;) but her looks—her tears—her broken exclamations, spoke more forcibly the feelings of her heart. But, the first flush of joy over, many a bitter thought arose. She was still the fallen, degraded, dependant being, without a home—without a friend save one—him to

whom she owed all—and Delmour !—but on Delmour she *would* not think—she would wait in all the unnatural calmness of patience, which knew not resignation, till she heard from him—and then !—and her heart heaved in agony as she thought what might *then* be the result.

Lyndsay seemed to guess something of what was passing in her mind, for he said, with some emotion—

“ Those who like yourself have been imposed upon in this fraud—ought not they also to be undeceived ?—shall I perform that duty for you ?—shall I write——” he stopped ; but Gertrude knew to whom he alluded, and, for a moment, she wished that Delmour were indeed apprized of the discovery which had been made—that she was not the daughter of the horrid Lewiston—but in another instant she rejected the idea.

“ No,”—thought she—“ I will not seem to court his notice—as heiress of Rossville I gloried in avowing my preference for him ; but as the poor homeless Gertrude, ’tis he must now seek me—my heart may break, but it will not bend—I will wait—I will be to him all or nothing !” But she almost gasped as she repeated to Lyndsay—“ I

will wait——” then, after a pause, she added, with a deep blush, “ but do you what you think right for me.”

And Lyndsay’s generous disinterested spirit, guided upon every occasion by that heavenly principle, “ Do unto others even as you would that others should do unto you,” prompted him to write and acquaint Delmour with the truth. As the daughter of Lewiston, he was certain he never would have stooped to an alliance with Gertrude ; but whether, as she was now situated, he would still fulfil his engagement, was a doubtful question. At any rate, it was due to him to be undeceived ; and though he comprehended and approved of the delicacy which kept Gertrude silent, he deemed it but the more incumbent on him to declare the truth. He therefore wrote a simple and brief statement of what had passed, without noticing or alluding to any thing else, and having dispatched his letter, he awaited the answer in an agitation of mind little inferior to Gertrude’s.

Meanwhile, Dr Bruce and Mr and Miss Black had successively arrived, and it was Lyndsay’s painful task to make the two latter acquainted with the guilty transaction, which he did in the

gentlest and most delicate manner. But, however desirous he was of sparing their feelings, it was impossible to soften the disgraceful fact, which fell upon them like a thunderbolt, and affected them each according to the difference of their mind and feelings. When the first shock had been surmounted, it was settled that Miss Black should remain at Rossville for the present in attendance upon Mrs St Clair, whose situation was such as to disarm every hostile feeling, even could such have found harbour in her sister's breast. But it was in sorrow, not in anger, that she acknowledged the disgrace which had fallen upon them; and Lyndsay hoped, that her soft unupbraiding spirit might tend to calm Gertrude's wilder grief—but Gertrude refused to see her.

“Do not,” said she to Lyndsay, with an agitation that shook her whole frame—“do not ask me to see any one at present—*never* ask me to see the sister of ——” she stopped shuddering.

“But you forgive her, Gertrude?” said Lyndsay.

Gertrude was silent for some moments, then exclaimed with a burst of emotion—

“ Oh ! it is dreadful to have been thus striving against nature—striving to love as my mother her who was my bitterest enemy—she has broken bands which God himself had knit—my mother !—and I knew her not as such !—gentle and uncomplaining, I treated her as my servant—Oh ! may God forgive me—but do not ask me to forgive *her* !”

“ Ah ! Gertrude, it was not thus we were taught to pray by Him who forgave us !”

But Gertrude only wept in bitterness of heart.

“ Dear Gertrude ! you have been heroic—will you not be forgiving ?—Do not let me think you find it easier to be great than to be good.”

“ For you I would do much,” said Gertrude, in increasing emotion—“ I would do even this, if I could—but I cannot—do not, then—do not name her to me,” cried she passionately, while she pressed her hands on her bosom, as if to still the tumult of her soul—“ She it is who has made me the lost, degraded, wretched being that I am, and ever must remain ;”—and again her tears burst forth.

“ How you disappoint me, Gertrude !” said Lyndsay, with a sigh.—“ I had flattered myself,

that the same greatness of mind which led you to cast far from you all that you most prized on earth, would at the same time have taught you the worthlessness of those mere worldly objects—Ungrateful that you are !—Which of all the gifts a liberal Creator has endowed you with would you exchange for those empty distinctions which one creature bestows upon another ?—Would you exchange your beauty for rank—your talents for wealth—your greatness of mind for extended power—for all of them would you exchange your immortal soul ?—Ah ! Gertrude, what avails it by what name we are called for the few short years of our earthly pilgrimage ?—If to be made fit partakers of immortal life is, as I believe it is, the sole end of existence, all that we are called upon to endure here are but means for that end. Do not impute your trials, then, severe as they are, to a being such as yourself—but look upon them as instruments in the hand of God, it may be to bring you unto Him—Even in this world, Gertrude, you may yet live to reap in smiles what has been sown in tears, if you will look for happiness where it is only to be found.”

Gertrude shook her head, and still wept—but

her tears were softer, and her agitation less violent.

Lyndsay's was not that indiscreet zeal which would break the bruised reed, and quench the smoking flax, in its blind misjudging enthusiasm. He looked not that the soil should be harrowed, and the seed sown, and the harvest reaped, at one and the same time—but he trusted that the influence of Divine truth would bring peace to the soul, still fainting with agony beneath the load assigned it—and that the heart which God had stricken would yet, in prostrating itself at the throne of grace, and acknowledging Him in all His ways—rise superior to the changes of this passing world. “O virtue! when this solemn pageantry of earthly grandeur shall be no more, when all distinctions but moral and religious shall vanish; when this earth shall be dissolved, when the moon shall be no more a light by night, neither the sun by day; thou shalt still survive thy votary's immortal friend—thou shalt appear like thy great Author in perfect beauty; thy lustre undiminished, thy glory imperishable!”

CHAPTER XXXI.

I grant that the stroke which has laid thy hopes low,
Is perhaps the severest that nature can know ;
If hope, but deferr'd, may cause sickness of heart,
How dreadful to see it for ever depart !

BARTON.

GERTRUDE now experienced the agony of suspense in all its intensity. Restless and unquiet she walked about her own apartment, or starting at every sound, stopped to listen with suspended breath—then pressed her throbbing heart, as though she could have stilled its tumults by the touch of her hand.

“ Why do I submit to this—why do I endure it ?” inquired she of herself, as she bent her burning brow in shame at the tears that had fallen in showers on her lover’s picture, on which she had been gazing—“ He left me, and at what a time !—No, I will not wait to be rejected—cast off like something vile—I will go if it were to beg ;”

and for a moment she formed the desperate resolution of leaving Rossville secretly—of flying she knew not—cared not where—she would find some spot on which to lay her aching head till death should close her eyes. But then the madness of the scheme struck her—she felt she could not mingle with the vulgar throng:—young, distinguished, and delicately bred, where could she find a shelter? Lyndsay, 'tis true, had offered her a home—but her spirit already bowed beneath the load of gratitude she owed to him. Then, with that ebb and flow of mind which is ever the effect of powerful excitement, returned her faith in Delmour—yes—it was—it must be his love for her which had hurried him from her—his was not that selfish passion—he had said so a thousand times, which would plunge the object he loved in all the wretchedness of poverty, and she knew that he was poor—that he was even in debt—that it was impossible he could support her as he would have his wife appear—but he had gone to prevail upon his brother to provide for them, and he would come—Oh yes! he would come and claim her as his own!

It was thus Gertrude communed with herself

—her mind either a prey to despair, or busied in vain fantastic dreams, which, even if they were destined to be realized, it was idleness to indulge. Her agitation was not lessened when, on the third morning after her lover's departure, intelligence arrived of the death of Mr Delmour !

Gertrude was not so callous to right feeling as not to hear of this event with mingled grief and awe ; and the moral was too striking not to fall with conviction on her heart. With tears she acknowledged the vanity—the emptiness of worldly distinction—and kneeling, prayed—for the moment fervently, devoutly prayed in all the humiliation of a contrite spirit, and an awakened heart.

Lyndsay did not omit the opportunity of enforcing the solemn lesson, which came to shed its calming influence on her ruffled breast. It, indeed, required no very high sense of religion, at such a time, to feel the utter insignificance of mere worldly greatness—and to acknowledge that its grandeurs are vapours—its pleasures illusions—its promises falsehoods—when he, on whom it seemed to have lavished all that it had to bestow, was now as if in mockery—

“ A thing, at thought of which
The roused soul swells boundless and sublime !”

But, alas ! these wholesome thoughts were yet strangers in Gertrude’s heart ; and the first sudden shock over, bright thoughts began to spring up even from the ashes of the dead.

“ Even in this hour of grief and fears,
When awful Truth unveil’d appears,
Some pow’r unknown usurps my breast ;
Back to the world my thoughts are led,
My feet in folly’s lab’rinth tread,
And fancy dreams that life is blest.”

Again Gertrude’s heart bounded, as she thought her lover was now Earl of Rossville—able and—could she doubt—willing to restore her to all she had lost ? *She* would have renounced all for him—she had stood the test, and a thousand, aye, ten thousand times had he wished that it were in his power to prove to her the disinterestedness of his love in return.

There was no longer room for uncertainty ; although he might not choose to involve her in the hardships and privations of poverty, yet how would he exult in raising her to the height from which she had descended ! And again gay and vain-

glorious visions began to swim before those eyes still wet with tears of penitence for former follies.

Suspense was now changed into impatience scarcely less supportable, as she counted the days and hours which must elapse before she could receive the assurance of her lover's faith—but, at length, the time came, when she might hear from him—but no letter was there. Another—and another—and another day passed on, every instant of which was as an age of agony to Gertrude's throbbing heart, as again it was overwhelmed with a sea of doubts, and again the sickness of hope deferred crept like poison through her veins. But who can count the beatings of the lonely heart? Once more she had watched from her window the arrival of the post—again she had held her breath to listen for the footstep that was to bring her the letter on which her existence seemed to depend—but a long and dreary pause followed—at length it was broken by a message from Lyndsay, requesting to see her.

“Something is wrong!” thought she; “he is dead—or——” she could not finish the sentence, even in imagination, but pale, trembling, gasping

for breath, she repaired to the library, where she was told he awaited her.

Her own agitation was too great to permit her to notice Lyndsay's, as he advanced to meet her, and would have spoken, but the words died on his lips. Then Gertrude looked on him, but it was not grief that was depicted in his countenance—yet neither was it joy, but a strange mingled expression agitated his usually serene features, which she, in vain, strove to construe. He took her hand, but it was in a manner more respectful and with an air more embarrassed, than she was wont to testify towards her, with whom he had hitherto been on the familiar footing of a friend.

“ You have heard—you have heard”—cried Gertrude—but she could say no more

“ I have,” said Lyndsay with an emotion he vainly tried to master ; “ Gertrude—dearest Gertrude,” he turned from her for a moment, and paced the chamber in disorder, while Gertrude, bereft of all motion, stood pale and speechless—Suddenly he approached her, and putting a letter into her hands, he held them locked in his, while he said in a voice, choked with agitation—

“ Gertrude—I cannot now say what I feel—

but if, at this time, you can think of me at all, think of me as your truest, your firmest friend—as one who shares your every feeling.” He then quitted the apartment, but Gertrude was scarcely conscious he had spoken, for a glance of her eye had told her the letter was from Delmour—It was an opened one, and addressed to Lyndsay. With desperate courage she unfolded it—she began to read it with a beating heart and a trembling hand—but as she went on, every nerve and fibre felt as though they were hardening into stone. It was as follows :

“ DEAR LYND SAY,

“ THE melancholy intelligence of my lamented brother’s death would reach you some days ago—that, together with the heart-rending scene I went through at Rossville, was almost too much for me, and must be my excuse for having so long delayed acknowledging your letter. Perhaps another motive, still more powerful, has also influenced me, which I know I need not hesitate to avow to you—It is the earnest heart-felt desire I have to do every justice to one, who, though still dearer to me than life, and whom it is distraction

to me even to think of relinquishing—yet, at present, I fear I may not venture to call mine—yet mine I know she is, and ever will be in heart, as Heaven knows how wholly I am hers!—But circumstanced as we both are, it would be folly, madness—in short, you must be aware of the difficulties with which I have to contend—You know, and I do not hesitate to acknowledge, that I consider birth as the most important of all distinctions, and, I believe, I am not singular in my sentiments upon this subject, at least, I know my uncle the Duke (whom I ventured to sound upon this matter) is still more decided in his opinion, and as he is now in a very declining state, and has much in his own power, I own I am unwilling to come to extremities with him at present. You are aware, that the Rossville property, considerable as it is, did not prove sufficient, during the last year, to support the dignity of the family, and that considerable debts have, in consequence, been incurred.—I am far from intending to convey the most distant insinuation against the dear object of my affections, for if any blame was imputable, it would be, perhaps, more justly due to me—but she only lived as her rank demanded,

and as I should choose my wife to do—and I merely mention this, to prove to you, that I am, at present, far from independent—as my own debts (that to yourself amongst others, dear Lyndsay) are of some magnitude, and both together leave me little choice as to what, in common prudence, I am called upon to do. Distressing as it is, I consider myself compelled, for the present, to relinquish those hopes which have so long formed the happiness of my life, and which I will still cherish even in spite of fate—a time may, and, I trust, will yet come, when no such heart-rending alternative will be necessary. Meanwhile, it is my most anxious wish that every thing should be done that can possibly contribute to the peace and comfort of my adored Gertrude. I entreat you will—therefore prevail upon her to remain at Rossville. It is my intention to go abroad for a year or two, and it will materially contribute to my tranquillity to know that she is still mistress there, and in possession of all those enjoyments, which I know she prizes so much. I must therefore entreat your good offices to have every thing arranged on this point. Let her choose whom she will to reside with her, or should she per-

sist in choosing another residence, let every thing be arranged in the most liberal manner. I inclose you an order upon Coutts, that you may draw on my account for whatever is requisite—let nothing be wanting that can, in any degree, tend to embellish an existence, which, alas! from henceforth, like my own, I fear will be but a painful one. Dear Lyndsay, to your hands I commit my treasure—on your friendship I place the utmost reliance—I know her affections are mine—wholly mine—and I———but who that has loved Gertrude could ever love another?—I will endeavour to write to her myself when my nerves have regained some firmness—but at present you may judge of the state of my mind from this distracted scrawl. Write to me, I entreat of you, dear Lyndsay—tell me how my dearest love bears herself—write by return of post—tell me all,—every thing, and believe me your affectionate

ROSSVILLE.

“ P.S.—The law people are taking the necessary steps to have my rights recognized. Contrive to save my poor Gertrude’s feelings as much as possible on this occasion.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

————— Go to ; hath life
A blessing yet for me ? I have no country,
I have no house, a refuge from my ills.

EURIPIDES.

SUCH was the letter, and when Gertrude ended it, she cast one look of anguish to heaven, as she murmured—

“ For him, oh, my God ! I would have abandoned all ! Thou knowest that I would ! ”

She could not have found a name for the wretchedness which wrung her heart, but yet with a mien outwardly calm, save for her burning cheek and quivering lip, she passed to the adjoining room where Lyndsay was waiting, with the most intense anxiety, the effect which this communication would produce. As Gertrude returned the letter, she merely bent her head to him ; but he saw that her eyes were tearless, and her air

was even loftier than it was wont. She moved on towards a door, at the opposite end of the room, which communicated with her own suite of apartments, and Lyndsay made no attempt to detain her; but when her hand was upon the lock, she turned round, and approaching him, took his hand, and pressed it between hers—

“My dear—my only friend,” said she, “may God bless you!”

“Why do you say so now, dearest Gertrude?” cried Lyndsay, fearing, he knew not what, from the unnatural calmness of her manner.

“Because—because I feel it,” said Gertrude with a sigh, as though her heart had broke.

“And I—may I too say all I feel for you?” said Lyndsay with emotion.

“No—why should you feel for me?—I am well—quite well,” said Gertrude, with the same sort of wild calmness, “but I will never forget your kindness to me!”

A tear gleamed in her eye as she turned away. Lyndsay made an effort to detain her, as he exclaimed, “Speak, then—tell me what you would have me do to serve you—to save you if I can from——”

Gertrude gently disengaged herself from him, while she said in a firm voice, "I will not remain here—but I have arrangements to make before I go:—do not seek to detain me!"

"Where will you go, dearest Gertrude?—my house is yours, and my aunt——"

"I will not go to your house, Edward," said Gertrude, and her voice began to falter:—then, making an effort to regain her composure, she quickly added, "I know not yet where I shall go—I must have time—I have arrangements to make—but I cannot breathe here—" and she gasped as she spoke: then waving her hand to Lyndsay, she hastily entered her own apartment.

Still Gertrude's energy did not forsake her, as she set about her preparations; but she mistook for fortitude what in reality was only fever of mind, and it was under that false excitement that she acted. She was alive but to one feeling—she had been deserted by him for whom she would have sacrificed the world itself—him whom she loved sufficiently, even to have renounced—him whom every hallowed obligation, every principle of honour, every feeling of tenderness, had

bound to her by ties she had considered as indissoluble. He had dared to insult her, by supposing she would choose to be indebted to his bounty for her support—he deemed her unworthy of being his wife—and he would have her submit to become his pensioner!—to live upon his alms!—to be clothed and fed by him!—to drag out a life of dependence amid those very scenes which had witnessed her in the full meridian of her prosperity! She could not—she would not consider what she was to do—whither she was to go : it mattered not what became of her were she but away from Rossville—she would work—beg—starve—but she would not sink into a base stipendiary.

But, alas ! Gertrude knew nothing of life and its ways, when she reasoned thus—she knew nothing of those various manners and degrees in which every human being—even those possessed of the loftiest feelings of independence—are bound more or less to one another. She only panted to escape from the degradation she felt she was enduring, and every other idea was absorbed in that single one.

But when her arrangements were completed, then the dreadful sense of her own utter loneli-

ness came upon her, and she pressed her throbbing temples in agony, as she leant her head upon her hand, and vainly strove to think of whither and to whom she would go. But “the world seem’d all before her where to choose,” for she had no claim upon any one being in it; and who would claim her—abject—degraded—fallen as she was?—No one, but the generous noble-minded Lyndsay, and he was the last person she would have recourse to—she could not bear that he should look upon her in her humiliation—he knew that she had been rejected—forsaken—he had seen that heart which had been so fondly sought, so proudly won, now cast back upon her as a thing of nought!

She was roused from this agony of thought by the entrance of her maid, to announce that Mr Ramsay was in the saloon, and wished to see her.

“I will not see him—I will not see any one that——” and, again, the horror which she felt for all connected with the author of her misery rushed upon her.

“My Lady!” exclaimed Miss Masham.

“I am not your Lady—I am—but no matter

—you will know all when I am gone——Gone!—Where, whither?” repeated she to herself. Then the sudden resolution seized her, that she would see Mr Ramsay—he would take her from Rossville—no matter what became of her after that; and not daring to deliberate, she hastily passed on to the apartment, still under the excitement of feelings strained to their utmost stretch.

Mr Ramsay had been made acquainted by Mr Black with the discovery which had taken place, and, for some time, indignation against Mrs St Clair was the only feeling that found place in his breast; then, as that somewhat abated, his heart began to yearn with pity towards the victim of her guilt, and, at length, that stranger sentiment (for uncle Adam was not prone to the indulgence of such weakness) gradually grew into something almost akin to joy, at the thought that she, whom he had always loved for her resemblance to his first and only love, was indeed her descendant. The resemblance, even in his mind’s eye, grew twenty times stronger; and he felt that he should look upon her with greater delight as the grand-daughter of Lizzie Lundie, than ever he had done as Countess of Rossville. She was

his own nearest relation, too, for Lizzie and he had been cousins-german—brother and sister's children—while his connection with the Blacks was only by half-blood. All this uncle Adam had revolved over and over again, as he paced his little chamber, irresolute how to act. At length, unable to come to any fixed determination, he took chaise from the Blue Boar, and set off for Rossville, where he arrived, as if Heaven-directed, at the very moment when his appearance seemed, indeed, an interposition of Providence. For the first time, he voluntarily extended his hand, and grasped Gertrude's in it, with a vehemence which was indicative of the warmth and sincerity of his good-will: both were silent for some moments, for even uncle Adam, for the time, seemed overcome; but, at length, he said—

“It is needless to say onything aboot it—I dinna want to hear ony mair—just tell me whether I can do you ony gude.—Will you gang wi' me?”

“Oh! yes—yes,” cried Gertrude—“take me from this—oh! take me now ——”

“But stay now—are you sure you're ready?”

said Mr Ramsay, who was not quite so rapid in his movements ; and who, although perfectly sincere in his offer, had not expected it to be so promptly acted upon. Moreover, he was not quite sure that they perfectly understood each other, and he thought some explanation necessary before they set off together. He would fain have put the question in a delicate form, but he had never been accustomed to sounding, and delicacy was not his *fort* ; he was, therefore, fain to have recourse to his own method of gaining information, which was, to put the question in the most direct manner ; and he said, with his usual bluntness—

“ Do you ken whar it is you’re gawin ? ”

The question struck like a dagger to Gertrude’s heart, and smote with the consciousness of her own desolation, she could not speak—she turned away her head to hide the burning drops that forced their way from her eyes.

“ I have no home,” said she, in a voice choking with emotion ; “ I am a beggar ! ”

“ I’m very glad to hear’t,” said uncle Adam warmly ; “ that’s just the very thing I wanted—I rejoice, that you’re to owe naething to that

prood thrawn pack—so come wi' me, my dawtie, and ye's no want for ony thing that I hae to gie you—Lizzie Lundie's bairn will be my bairn—so come your ways—'The bird maun flichter that flees wi' ae wing'—but ye's haud up your head yet in spite o' them a'."

In the tumult of her mind, Gertrude had entirely overlooked the ties which bound her, the daughter of Jacob Lewiston, to him, whom she had only known as the uncle of Mrs St Clair—but now it glanced upon her, that in uncle Adam she beheld a relation of her own—the only being with whom she might claim kindred. But she was too wretched even to feel pleasure at the discovery—she only considered, that he would take her away—that he would give her a shelter, and there she would die, and be heard of no more.

"Is there naebody here you wad see before you gang?" said Mr Ramsay, as she was hurrying wildly away.

"No—no," cried she impatiently, then suddenly stopping, "Yes, I have one kind friend to whom I will say farewell once more," as the thought glanced upon her, that Lyndsay would

be glad to see her so protected, and she sent to say she wished to see him. He instantly hastened to her, and was made acquainted with the arrangement which had been made, though he was still left in ignorance of the relationship which subsisted between them; for Gertrude, in the fervour of her mind, had already ceased to think of it, and uncle Adam, from certain tender feelings, was unwilling to enter into particulars.

Although he was not exactly the person to whose hands Lyndsay would have chosen to commit Gertrude, yet, situated as she was, even uncle Adam's home was better than none, especially as he most cordially invited him to come to it as often as he pleased.

“There is one person you wished me to see, and I would not,” said Gertrude in agitation to Lyndsay, as she was almost on the threshold to depart; “but now I would see *her* sister before I go.”

And the wish was no sooner signified to Miss Black than she hastened to comply with it. At sight of her, a slight tremor shook Gertrude's

frame, but she neither wept nor spoke—she merely kissed her twice with fervour, then turned away, and bade a long farewell to Rossville. The same day Mrs St Clair was removed to the house of her sisters.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Sorrows are well allow'd and sweeten nature,
Where they express no more than drops on lillies ;
But when they fall in storms they bruise our hopes,
Make us unable, though our comforts meet us,
To hold our heads up.

MASSINGER.

BUT this state of high-wrought feeling could not long continue. In vain Gertrude struggled against the burning sense of her wrongs and her wretchedness—in vain she repressed each rising sigh and starting tear, with lofty scorn at the weakness they would have betrayed—in vain she repeated to herself, a thousand times, that she was calm—she was well. Her throbbing head and aching heart told another tale, and she was at length compelled to yield to the fever which, for some time, had been preying upon her. Then reason fled, and for many days her life was doubtful ; and, during that time, poor uncle

Adam, like some faithful mastiff, hung round the bed, which contained his new-found treasure, in all the stern woe of rigid old age. Lyndsay was the only person (excepting the medical attendants) whom he would see; but to him he would utter the grief which filled his heart even to overflowing, long closed as it had been against each softer feeling—and Lyndsay, even in the midst of his own anguish, strove to cheer and support the disconsolate old man. But the object of all this solicitude was once more restored to them—the crisis of the fever was past, and Gertrude again woke to consciousness. It was only then she was aware of the danger she had passed; she had walked unconsciously through the valley of the shadow of Death—the gates of eternity had been before her, but she had not descried them. It was then, while still hovering on the confines of this world, that she felt all the emptiness and the vanity of its pleasures; her dreams of greatness—her hopes of happiness—her gay-spent days—her festive nights, where were they now?—Gone—and where they had been, was marked but with shame—disappointment—remorse! All earthly distinctions had been hers—and what was the

account which she had now to render to God for the use of these His gifts? On which of these was it that she would now build her hopes of acceptance with Him—on which of them would she now rest her hopes of eternal happiness? Alas! mirerable comforters were they all!

A deep melancholy now took possession of Gertrude's mind. Like all persons of an ardent and enthusiastic temperament, she flew from one extreme to the other; and what had formerly "whispered as faults, now roared as crimes," only to be expiated by a life of penitence and sorrow. She kept her own apartment—refused to see any body, even Lyndsay, and passed her time in solitude and woe. In vain did uncle Adam attempt to stem the tide of affliction, which had thus broken in upon her shattered heart. She acknowledged his kindness with tears and with gratitude; but when he attempted to remonstrate with her, or urged her to see any one, she became violently agitated, and her only answer was, "If you love me, suffer me—oh! suffer me to die in peace."

The indulgence of her grief had now become a sort of strange unnatural luxury to her—she

loved to sit for hours brooding on her sorrows—to hoard them, as it were, in her own heart—she could not have borne that another should have shared in them—she loved to think that no one *could* share in them—that she stood alone in the world—a wretched, forsaken, lonely thing. To a heart such as hers, the existence of some powerful sentiment was necessary—she had strove to tear from her heart every root, every fibre of her once cherished tenderness, but no flower had arisen to fill the void they had left.—All was dreariness and desolation.

Lyndsay had written to her repeatedly, urging and imploring her to see him, and using every argument to rouse her from this wasteful excess of grief; but she only wept when she read his letters, and wished that he would cease to think of one so wretched, so degraded, as she was.

Poor uncle Adam was almost heart-broken at this pertinacity of suffering—all that he possessed, he had told her again and again, should be hers—she should go to Bloom-Park—she should be mistress there—she should have every thing that gold and good-will could procure to make her happy—but Gertrude would only exclaim—“ No—

no—once I had wealth and power, and how did I abuse them !—leave me, then, the beggar that I am—that I deserve to be !”

She was in this state of mind, when one day the door of her apartment was gently opened, and Anne Leslie slowly entered. At sight of her, Gertrude turned away her head in displeasure at the intrusion ; but Anne caught her hand, and, as she respectfully kissed it, her tears dropt upon it. Gertrude stood some moments irresolute, then, throwing herself on Anne’s neck, she exclaimed, with a burst of anguish—

“ You trusted in God, and He has not deceived you—while I ——” she stopped, overcome with the acuteness of remembrance.

“ But you will trust in Him, and He will yet put gladness in your heart,” said Anne, wiping away the tears from her own sweet serene face, where shone the peaceful calm of a heavenly mind.

“ No—never,” said Gertrude—“ I do not deserve to be happy,” added she, in an accent of despair.

“ Ah !—who has ever deserved that happiness which we owe to a Saviour’s love ? ‘ If Thou, Lord,

shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?" Guilty and frail as we all are, which of us would dare to lift up our eyes to Heaven, and say we merited its favour?"

"But I had power and I misused it—I had wealth and I squandered it—I had an idol, oh! my God!—and Thou wast forgot!"

"Alas!" said Anne, meekly; "who can weigh even their own actions in the balance? If your errors were more glaring than mine—so were your temptations greater. He only who made the heart can judge it, for He only knows what have been its trials."

"He knows," said Gertrude, bitterly, "that, in the day of prosperity, mine was far from Him."

"And therefore has He dissolved those vain delights which had taken possession of the soul He had destined for Himself. Ah! do not look to God merely as to an offended Judge, from whose face you turn away—but as to a tender Father, who invites you to come unto Him and He will give you rest—happiness greater than any you have ever known."

"Happiness!" repeated Gertrude. "No; my heart is for ever closed against that!"

“ Ah ! do not say so,” said Anne ; “ God can put an heavenly calm into that heart which is shut against all earthly joys.”

Gertrude felt the truth of these simple words ; and, by degrees, her soul emerged from the dreary stupor in which it had so long been buried, and her mind became soothed and composed beneath the calming influence of that religion, whose very essence is love and peace. She saw that her heart had gone astray in its own delusions, but these were dispelled. She had received a new impulse, and she had awakened, if not to happiness, at least to something less perishable—less fatal. Her’s had been “ a young fancy, which could convert the sound of common things to something exquisite ;”—but now she bowed her heart in quietness—she knew “ her blighted prospects could revive no more, yet was she calm, for she had Heaven in view.”

Oh ! Thou who dry’st the mourner’s tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceiv’d and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee !
The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown ;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone ;

But Thou wilt heal the broken heart
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

MOORE.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Forgiveness to the injur'd does belong ;
But they ne'er pardon who commit the wrong.

DRYDEN.

IT was with emotion that Gertrude and Lyndsay met once more, and both were struck with the change in each other's appearance, for Lyndsay, too, looked as though he had indeed borne a part in all her sufferings—and she was smote with the selfishness which had caused her so long to indulge her sorrow, unmindful of the generous heart which had shared in it. But if the brilliancy of her beauty was dimmed by the blight which had fallen upon her, it had acquired a character of still deeper interest in the eyes of those who loved her.

“ Her pale cheek,
Like a white rose on which the sun hath look'd

Too wildly warm, (is not this passion's legend ?)
The drooping lid whose lash is wet with tears,
A lip which has the sweetness of a smile,
But not its gaiety—do not these bear
The scorched foot-prints sorrow leaves in passing,
O'er the clear brow of youth ?”

“ I would first see you to acknowledge the boundless gratitude I owe for all your kindness to me,” said Gertrude, who was the first to speak ; “ and then——once you asked me to forgive her who had injured me, and I would not, for then I was proud, passionate, revengeful ; but now I would go to her, I would forgive her, even as I trust I have been forgiven !”

“ Dearest Gertrude !” said Lyndsay, with emotion, “ how happy this makes me—but do not humble me by talking of your gratitude to me—to have done less than I have done, when the means were in my power, would have been criminal—if I have been enabled to serve you, that is recompence more than sufficient.—I have borne a selfish part in your welfare, for your happiness was mine—in vain my heart has tried to create a separate interest—it cannot.”

“ Do not talk thus, my dear friend,” said Gertrude, in agitation.

“ Ah ! Gertrude, since the same true and immortal passion has touched our hearts, suffer me now to avow the sentiments which I have so long cherished for you——”

“ No, no—not now,” cried Gertrude, in increasing emotion ; be to me all that you have hitherto been—a friend, a guardian—a brother—but——”

She sighed, and, in spite of herself, a tear rolled slowly down her cheek.

“ I will, then,” said Lyndsay, for he feared that the ties which bound them might be broken in the effort to draw them closer.

Gertrude went to the house of the Miss Blacks, and was received by them with tears of tenderness and thankfulness.

Mrs St Clair had recovered from the effects of the laudanum she had swallowed, and it was now her determination to go abroad for the remainder of her life, and in a few days she was to depart.

“ She talked much of you for some time,” said Miss Black, “ and said she could not die in peace till she had obtained your forgiveness—but of late—alas ! since her health has been restored, she has thought, I fear, less seriously—and she

has not spoken of you at all—perhaps she may even be averse to see you.” And she went to acquaint her that Gertrude was there.

Some time elapsed before she returned, and she said, her sister had been violently agitated at the thoughts of seeing Gertrude, and had at first refused to do it ; but that she was now more composed, and had consented to receive her, upon condition that she came alone. The room was darkened to which Gertrude was conducted—but there was a studied arrangement—an air of elegant seclusion about it, which at once indicated that the inmate was unchanged—no symptom of penitence was there—She was attired in an elegant *deshabille*, and her *fauteuil*—her cushions—her footstool—her screen—her flowers—her perfumes—her toys, were all collected around her in the manner Gertrude had been so long accustomed to see them, and on the arrangement of which Mrs St Clair had been wont to pique herself as a combination of French elegance and English comfort.

For a moment Gertrude felt a rising of disgust at this display of heartless selfishness—but she repressed it, and extending her hand, said mildly—

“ I am come to offer that forgiveness which I once refused ; but God has put better feelings in my heart ; and I now forgive you from the heart as I hope to be forgiven.”

“ I too have something to forgive,” said Mrs St Clair, vehemently ; “ I have to forgive the cruel disregard—the unnatural—unrelenting violence with which you treated one who had ever been as a mother to you in all but the natural tie—I had done all for your aggrandizement—I had raised you from beggary and obscurity to wealth and greatness, and it is you who have brought me to shame, and misery, and poverty—and am I to have nothing to forgive ? I humbled myself in the dust to you, and you was deaf to my prayers—I told you that my life was in your hands—that it did not pay the forfeit of your rash and inhuman conduct is no merit of yours—have I then nothing to forgive ?—But I do forgive,” said she, extending the hand she had hitherto refused, but with an air and manner of haughty condescension ; “ my wrongs and injuries have been great, but I forgive them.”

Gertrude almost recoiled with horror from the touch of one whose mind was still so perverted, and

whose soul seemed to have been corroded instead of purified by the judgment that had fallen upon her ; but she meekly took her hand, and said—

“ Mere human forgiveness is, indeed, a thing of nought—more blessed to them who give than to them who receive—but I pray—Oh ! God, do Thou hear my prayer, that Thy forgiveness may be vouchsafed !”

She turned and left the apartment—She did not wound her sisters by repeating what had passed—but her own heart felt lighter that she had been enabled to pray in sincerity of heart for heavenly forgiveness, even to her who had wrought all her woe.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Good the beginning, good the end shall be,
And transitory evil only makes
The good end happier.

SOUTHEY.

THE following day a plain but handsome carriage, with suitable attendants, stood at uncle Adam's door, which he at first seemed ashamed of—but after a little coyness and confusion, he let Gertrude understand it was for her accommodation, and proposed that they should together make trial of it.

Gertrude had never appeared abroad (except in her visit to Mrs St Clair) from the time of her arrival at Mr Ramsay's, and a thousand painful feelings rushed upon her at the thoughts of exposing herself to the public gaze—and the public gaze of a small, idle, gossiping, impertinent country town—she was, therefore, on the point

of expressing her repugnance, but she thought it would be unkind, ungrateful, when he had sacrificed his feelings so far as to set up a carriage for her, if she did not appear to be gratified by this proof of his affection. She, therefore, accepted of his proposal, and they set off together. She was not yet sufficiently mistress of her thoughts to bestow much observation on the shifting scenes as they passed along, and she was scarcely aware of where she was, or on what she looked, when she found herself at the very door of Bloom-Park. They entered, and a respectable-looking house-keeper and butler, with inferiors, stood ready to receive them.

“ There’s your Leddy,” said uncle Adam, giving Gertrude a slight push, by way of introducing her ; “ see that you a’ behave discreetly, an’ when ye want ony thing ye maun gang to her for’t—for she kens mair about thae things than me.”

This was quite an oration for uncle Adam, and having made it, he stotted in to one of the public rooms, and Gertrude followed him.

“ My dear uncle,” said she, for she still continued that appellation, “ how your kindness

overpowers me—I cannot express how much I feel it.”

“ Hoot, it’s naething,” said he, impatiently ; “ so dinna gang to fash yourself about that—the best thanks you can gi’e me is to let me see the red on your cheek, and the smile in your e’e that used to be there, and then I’ll believe that I’ve done you some gude—but no till then.” And he affectionately patted her shoulder, which was going great lengths for uncle Adam.

Every thing had evidently been done with a view to gratify Gertrude’s taste and feelings—and there was a good taste and elegance in the arrangements that had recently been made, for which, with all his good intentions, she could scarcely give uncle Adam credit—It must be Lyndsay’s doing—Lyndsay, who knew so well all her habits and pursuits, had provided every indulgence and facility for both—and that, too, merely in a general way, without descending to all the little *minutiæ* which it is woman’s prerogative to arrange.

The news of Mr Ramsay’s establishment at Bloom-Park soon circulated in the neighbourhood,

and was not long of reaching the ears of Mrs Major Waddell, and caused them to tingle with indignation and envy. In the midst of all her finery she was not happy, for Gertrude, as uncle Adam's heiress, was the thorn in her side—the bitter drop in her cup—the black man in her closet—the Mordecai at her gate! Such is ever the effect of any baleful passion, especially when operating on a weak mind, and so difficult is it to form an estimate of worldly enjoyment by the symbols of outward prosperity. Her only hope was, that she would be able to prove uncle Adam in his dotage, and, for that purpose, she would fain have established a system of *espionage* betwixt Thornbank and Bloom-Park; but all her schemes were counteracted by uncle Adam's sagacity. The only way in which she could therefore give vent to her malice was when in company with Gertrude, by taking, or rather making every opportunity of resting all claim to distinction solely on the ground of birth—family—connections, and other such adventitious circumstances, as the weak vulgar mind lays hold of to exalt itself in the eyes of those who must be weaker than itself to be so

dazzled. But in this she was met by uncle Adam, who guarded Gertrude, in aught that in any way concerned her, as a faithful shepherd's *colly* does the lamb committed to his charge, and he was now too happy to be discomposed even by Mrs Waddell—he had found something to love which had long been the desideratum in his life, and he was gradually getting more benign and mellow beneath Gertrude's gentle influence. The first inconveniences of a change of residence and habits fairly over, he even began to take some interest in rural avocations, only stipulating, that he was never to be spoken to on any of the numerous evils inseparable from extensive property, and which, not unfrequently, embitter the peace of the possessor—such as bad tenants—bad crops—bad weather—bad servants—poachers—robbers—trespassers—and all the thousand ills that wealth is heir to, and which, perhaps, bring happiness more upon a par between the rich and the poor than is generally supposed.

One of the first to pay her respects to the new heiress of Bloom-Park was Miss Pratt. That lady's absence, or, at least, her silence, for so

long a period, remains to be accounted for to such as take an interest in her fate. But the simple matter of fact was, that she had been refreshing and invigorating herself at Harrowgate, at the expence of her friend and ally, Sir Peter Wellwood, and had but just returned to give the lie direct to the current report of Gertrude's having been rejected by her lover on the discovery of her birth. This, she roundly asserted, was so far from being the case, that she had, with her own ears, heard her refuse him again and again—it was consistent with her knowledge, that she had been long engaged to Edward Lyndsay—and, although the little episode of the turret scene was somewhat of a staggerer, yet even that Miss Pratt contrived to bolt, and settled the matter with herself, by her having had a great cold and ringing in her ears all that day, which had prevented her hearing exactly what passed. She, therefore, boldly claimed her five guineas from uncle Adam, though how far she was entitled to them was a doubtful question, and might have borne a dispute—and time was when uncle Adam would as soon have given her his five fingers as his five guineas upon such de-

bateable ground ; but now he was not disposed to cavil at trifles, and he paid her the money at the first suggestion, only taking every possible precaution against the possibility of his giving her a note more than enough.

“ Well, my dear,” said she, displaying her winnings to Gertrude—“ you see I can sing a blithe note at your wedding—ha ! ha ! ha !—and, by-the-bye, do you know the news is, that a certain cast-off lover of yours is on the top of his marriage with his old flame, the Duchess of St Ives ? They’re both together at Paris, it seems, and it’s all settled. I wish them good of one another, for I fancy they’re well met, but whether they’ll hang long together is another story.”

Gertrude could not hear of this event without some degree of emotion, but it soon passed away ; and when, at the end of some months, she read a pompous detail of it in the newspapers, it was with feelings far removed from either envy or regret. Still less would they have been called for could she have foreseen the termination which a few years brought round. Without the cement of one virtuous principle, vice soon dissolved the

tie which united them. Injured and betrayed by a faithless wife, the Earl of Rossville fought to avenge his honour, and fell in the cause. But long before then, Lyndsay's virtues, and the fervour and disinterestedness of his attachment, had insensibly created for him a warm interest in Gertrude's affections. As has been truly said, "In considering the actions of the mind, it should never be forgotten, that its affections pass into each other like the tints of the rainbow; though we can easily distinguish them when they have assumed a decided colour, yet we can never determine where each hue begins." *

The bewildering glare of romantic passion no longer shed its fair but perishable lustre on the horizon of her existence; but the calm radiance of piety and virtue rose with steady ray, and brightened the future course of a happy and a useful life; and Gertrude, as the wife of Edward Lyndsay, lived to bless the day that had deprived her of her earthly Inheritance. To that, indeed, by the death of Lord Rossville, who, dying with-

* Quarterly Review.

out a family, was succeeded by Lyndsay, she was again restored, with a mind enlightened as to the true uses and advantages of power and prosperity. Thus,

———“ All our ill
May, if directed well, find happy end.”

THE END.

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